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# ODD NEIGHBOURS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"LORD LYNN'S WIFE."

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.



LONDON:  
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.  
1865.

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## ODD NEIGHBOURS.

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### A NEW YORK SPECULATION.

“FROM the old country, sir, I guess? Thought so by your countenance. Your first visit, sir, to the U-nited States, may I presume?”

9 The gentleman who put these questions in a nasal drawling tone that bespoke the New Englander, had just entered the saloon of Colonel Pegler's little hotel at Lockhaven, in Pennsylvania. He had not come by the stage, as I had, but in a spider-wheeled tandem, drawn by two fine horses, which equipage I had seen through the window as I sat at dinner, and which he drove skilfully enough. The new comer was a tall loosely hung man,



with the straight black hair, the restless eyes and sallow complexion, common throughout the States, and was of a somewhat dandified appearance, in spite of the dust which clung to him.

“Want your dinner, sar?” asked the negro waiter, entering the room at this juncture, and almost before I could reply that I had never before crossed the Atlantic. The new comer made answer in the affirmative, glanced over the bill of fare, and the wine list, and then muttered something about getting rid of the grey dust of a Pennsylvania road, and hurried out.

Black Cicero transmitted the orders of the stranger to book-keeper and kitchen, and then came back to his favourite occupation of staring from the window and knocking down knats with his napkin. The manner of the new arrival had made a favourable impression, and Cicero made no secret of his opinions.

“Certain, mas’r, dat some great man. Bootiful hosses, reg’lar Albany bred, smart carriage and silver-plated harness. Don’t see such in ’tupid ole Lockhaven ebbery day.

Hate Lockhaven. Give warnin' and go, when month up. Cicero from de ole South, masr', not used to mean ways of dese parts."

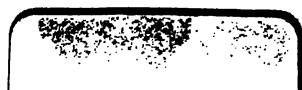
Cicero was sure that the stranger was governor of a state, mayor of a town, or, at the least, the "boss" of some great firm in the Empire City. Before I could inquire what a boss might be, the subject of these commendations returned, with washed hands and brushed coat, and Cicero scuttled off to fetch the turkey, venison steaks, green corn cobs, Maine ham, stewed fish, and unknown vegetables, which formed the most attractive portion of Colonel Pegler's rather scanty bill of fare. These he speedily brought, along with a bottle of old Madeira, and the new guest fell upon the repast with the swift and silent hunger of his nation; it was not until his appetite was quite appeased that he asked me any more questions.

"Touring, sir?"

"Not exactly," I answered, in a hesitating manner, for I was new to the country and its ways, and my heart was heavy within me. The two months I had spent in America had



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speculation.

with the straight  
and sallow com  
the States, and  
appearance, in  
to him.

and disappointment. I  
eye as he scanned me  
scrutiny that would have  
realness in the Old World,  
necessarily such in the New.

"Want you  
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out.

offer you a glass of this wine.  
terable, though no more South  
pretends, than a Hoboken oyster  
Mississippi alligator," said my pertina-  
and speaking with good-natured vo-  
he saw me pick up my hat and  
owards the door, in meditation of a  
"Your company will be really a

and I hope you won't leave me with  
B conversation accessible but that of a  
strange bar-keeper." Not to appear churlish,  
ca took the seat to which the hospitable Yankee  
s' looked me, and filled my glass at his invi-  
tion. The wine was good, much better than  
the cheap Catawba to which my lean purse  
had hitherto confined me, and the American  
did not ply me with direct questions, as  
before, but, by a succession of delicately-put  
hints, drew from me an amount of informa-  
tion, the retrospect of which afterwards sur-

prised myself. Young as I was, I was not so complete a greenhorn as to reveal my precise circumstances to a mere inquisitive stranger. My new acquaintance contrived to impress me with the belief that he was not actuated by common curiosity, and the sympathy with which he listened had great effect on one like myself, alone in an unfamiliar country, and having as yet met nothing but rebuffs and hope deferred.

I told him how I had been brought up to consider myself as heir to my uncle, Mr. James Hill, of Cockington, a man of considerable property; how an unlucky misunderstanding, for which I could not fairly consider myself to blame, had arisen between the rich bachelor uncle and the pennyless nephew; and how, rather than submit to what I esteemed injustice, I had taken my name off the books at Cambridge, had renounced all hope of my relative's inheritance, and had undertaken to support myself. I told him how, not having been brought up to any profession, I had been baffled in every attempt to gain employment in the densely-

stocked labour mart of the Old World ; how, by the advice of an old college chum (who had pressed a loan of money upon me along with the advice), I had started for America ; how I had, as yet, found no opening here. That very day I had come back disappointed from the Susquehanna canal-works, where I had hoped to be engaged as a sub-surveyor, but had been rejected for lack of practical knowledge. "Your mathematics," the head-surveyor had said, "are all tarnation fine ; but what I want is a chap that's a dab with the dumpy and theodolite, and you never, by your own showing, did a day's work with the instruments. Sorry, but you won't suit."

My only hope now was, as I told the American, to get engaged as mathematical teacher in some school or college.

My sympathetic friend shook his head.

"Poor work, sir, that. Schoolmasters don't count for much in our glorious Republic. The two great powers of America, sir, are law and commerce. They lead to Congress and the Senate ; to high diplomatic employ, the White House, and what


not. Law's out of my line; but for commerce—hum! Would you like to be a drummer?"

"A drummer?" said I, much surprised, especially as my acquaintance had anything but a military air; "what do you mean?"

The American arched his eyebrows, and so far forgot his habitual courtesy as to murmur something about "British ignorance," and then proceeded to inform me that the duties of a drummer were to make journeys, solicit orders, make purchases, effect sales, bargain, call in debts, and otherwise promote the interests of his employers.

"In fact, then," said I, "what you call a drummer, is pretty much what we style a commercial traveller."

"The identical functionary," said the Yankee; "only, as this air a land of liberty and light, the social station of a drummer is much superior to that which he would occupy in your antiquated island. Now, fact is, *we* want a drummer, and if you find the salary and work to your liking, and we arrange, you may draw your twelve hundred dollars an-




nual pay, with one per cent on net profits, and travelling allowances as liberal as Uncle Sam gives the Congress men. This, sir, is our address."

He handed me a large limp card, glazed and embossed, on which in pale gold letters glimmered the words, "Petter, Latch, and Jarman, Fourth Street, New York, G. J."

"G. J.," said I, rather puzzled; "what is G. J.?"

"General jobbers," said the American, solemnly; "and I am Hannibal C. Petter, at your service. Fill your glass, and allow me to ring for a fresh bottle. Here, you snowball Cicero, be spry with more Madeira, and get some chips of ice, do you hear? We speculate in all notions, from whale-teeth to Lyons velvet; and just now, there's an operation coming off West, in which you could try your wings."

Long before the wine in the second bottle had ebbed away, I was duly engaged as drummer to the firm of Petter and Co., conditionally on my testimonials being approved





by my employers. The college friend, to whose good nature I owed the means of starting in the New World, had procured me one or two introductory letters to respectable residents in New York. These gentlemen had not been able at the time, to assist me in finding a situation, crowded as the city was with needy candidates from Europe; but they had received me civilly enough, and I knew they would vouch for my being what I professed to be.

It was settled that I was to repair to Cincinnati, and there to await the receipt of remittances from the firm. The "operation," I was told, consisted in buying up for ready cash, a considerable quantity of corn, flour, wheat, apples, pigs, pork, and other articles of Western export, which Mr. Petter styled by the generic term of "pro-duce," and which were now supposed to be cheapened by a glut in the Eastern markets. The firm, however, had reason to know that this phase of affairs was merely temporary, and their arrangements were already made for shipping two cargoes of provisions to Europe, where they

had an advantageous contract with the heads of one of her Majesty's dockyards.

Very lucky I thought myself, especially when Mr. Petter, before calling for his bill and ordering out his tandem, insisted on pulling out his pocket-book, and forcing a number of dollar-notes upon me.

"There, there, dear sir; you travel on *our* account now, remember. Put up at the President House, Dr. Parlam's Hotel, when you get to Cincinnati, and I will forward the remittance there. When you come to New York, I shall be glad to present you to my partners. Latch has a delightful house, and his wife is a most accomplished matron. Jarman is, like myself, a bachelor. I am sure they will approbation the engagement which I have been fortunate enough to form with yourself. Six o'clock. I must slide. Adieu, Mr. Hill!"

Off went Hannibal C. Petter, leaving me half bewildered by the suddenness of my good fortune.

There were plenty of the members of my new profession, as well as partners, junior or

senior in Northern houses, on board the Ohio steam-boats; but there were none to whom my employers were known. To be sure, as one of the Philadelphia men observed, the growth of New York was gigantic, and so many new firms sprouted into existence, that many of them must necessarily be unknown to fame.

"Petter, Latch, and Jarman," said the Philadelphian, thoughtfully; "one of these names hangs, somehow, to my memory. 'Tain't Jarman though, nor Petter. Must be Latch. Let me see. There was a fellow of that name barber on board the Missouri steam-boat Jefferson; same man, do you think, now?"

"I should think not," I answered, more than half indignant at the question. "I have not the honour of being personally acquainted with Mr. Latch, but I have Mr. Petter's authority for affirming that he is a wealthy citizen. And his wife——"


"Ah! this Latch had a wife, too—not that there's anything wonderful in *that* coincidence—but I have heard that Madam Latch hadn't her equal for kidnappin' nigger babies: a per-

fect talent she had for it, and got hold of more bits of live ebony, among the free blacks to Ohio State, than any slave-stealer in the country. It was a way she had of talking over the mothers with fine words, for she was well educated, was Hetty Latch. Her husband made Missouri too hot to hold him, but the States Marshal never could put salt on him, never. A smart chap, Latch."

The Philadelphia broker whistled a bar or two of the Star-spangled Banner as he walked away, and for some minutes I was exceedingly uncomfortable. However, the awkward impression produced on my mind by the late conversation, soon wore off. I had no reason to think the barber of a Missouri packet was connected with my employer, the rich and hospitable merchant, in any other wise than as bearing the same name. And his wife, too, whom the senior partner had described as an accomplished matron, what connexion could there be between her and an obscure female who earned some base gain by wheedling credulous negresses out of their children for the supply of the Southern

markets? Absurd! It seemed ungrateful on my part even to give such a groundless suspicion, a temporary resting-place in my mind. What a contrast did my doubts afford to the frank confidence of Mr. Petter, whose dollars I had actually in my pocket, and at whose cost I was now voyaging. I blushed at my own meanness of spirit, and rather eschewed the company of the Philadelphia man for the rest of the trip.

I was by no means solitary in my new mode of life, and I found a new pleasure in American society. I was now a member of a recognised guild, and free from the harrassing curiosity which seldom fails to beset a traveller, native or foreign, whose exact rank and business furnish an enigma to the sovereign people. Mr. Petter had cautioned me not to be over-communicative as to the nature of the "operation," which my zeal and the funds of the firm were to carry out in the teeming West, and I kept my own counsel. It was wonderful how many people on board the steamer seemed to know one another. Most of these were bound for Cincinnati, like myself,



though some were going on to more western cities ; but I was surprised to see how widespread was the acquaintance of nearly all those sallow men and pale ladies. To some of the latter I was formally presented by a communicative gentleman, who had previously introduced himself as the editor of the Chillicothe Argus: a journal of which I was ashamed to own that I had never heard.

“ Allow me, sir, to be the means of making you known to Mrs. Pook, a leader of fashion at Cincinnati. Gives soirées of a splendour which whips anything the down-easters can manage, and unites all the beauty, elegance, intellect, and natural nobility, to be found in the Queen of the West. Major Elijah Pook, not at present on board, is an eminent citizen. Dry goods. Supplies many village stores. Is part proprietor of the Argus, and can give you most valuable information about the country.”

I found myself making my bow to a lady of drab complexion and Parisian costume, who glared at me through a pair of blue spectacles.

while her three daughters tittered a more cordial greeting to the Englishman.

"Welcome *to* Columbia, sir; welcome west," said Mrs. Pook, in a deep voice. "I shall be happy, sir, to see you *at* my receptions, if you make any stay *in* Cincinnati."

I expressed my acknowledgments, but could hardly help laughing, since it was the first time that my ears had listened to that strange peculiarity of New England pronunciation, confined to some districts of the coast, which throws an undue emphasis on humble pronouns and adverbs, careless of sense. But Mrs. Pook, although in her own judgment and that of others a strong-minded personage, was really a kind good woman. When she learned that I was quite new to the country, had no friends or relations there, and was stranded, on an unknown continent, an innate hospitality softened her usually didactic tone, and she patronised me in a gentle, motherly way.

I passed three or four very pleasant days in Cincinnati, before any communication reached me from my distant employers. The hotel to

which I had been recommended was a large and splendid one, and its dining-hall and drawing-room filled daily with a numerous company, while I made many acquaintances in the city. On the second evening, I was duly invited to one of Mrs. Pook's receptions; was introduced to the Major; and had the honour of dancing a quadrille with the youngest daughter, Miss Abigail, who asked me for more information about the aristocracy and court of Great Britain than I could have imparted, had my sole reading consisted of Burke's Peerage and the Gotha Almanack.

On the fourth day of my stay, the major asked me to dinner, and volunteered any assistance in his power towards effecting whatever business had brought me to the Queen City—with one reservation.

"Onless," said the worthy man, "your errand is dry goods. There, I can't help you. My own line, you perceive. And I have dealt consistently with Philadelphia jobbers these twelve years, and find them far more easy to trade with than your New York uppish merchants;



begging pardon, Mr. Hill, if you *are* in that grove."

I hastened to reassure the major. I knew nothing of dry goods, and it so happened that the padlock was taken off my lips. For, that very afternoon, a very heavy parcel of bank-notes, accompanied by urgent instructions to lose no time, had reached me from New York, and Mr. Petter expressly advised that I should ask some independent citizen to point out the best localities for investing in raw produce. Major Pook proved valuable in this capacity. Both as a wholesale linendraper and as part owner of a country newspaper which had a wide circulation among the farmers of Ohio and Indiana, he knew a great deal about the rural population.

"Sir," said he, "I'll be happy to accompany you, per boat, on Monday, down river a bit, and introduce you to some of the mammoth pig-dealers and most respectable farmers in the west of our state. No trouble, I assure you. I want to call at Madison, Tenedos, Amelia, and elsewhere, about business of my own—

a new assortment from the old country, that makes Lowell Mills sing small, I guess."

Thereupon the major proceeded to give me some useful hints about the Western character.

"Our folks are main good grit," said he; "but they stroke ugly when you rub agin the grain. In a bargain with them, you needn't double and twist as you must with the down-easters, who think themselves robbed if their tongues don't ache afore a trade's effected. Strike quick and sharp, with no appearance of hurry, look 'em bold in the face, and be downright. Our folk hate tricks. Soft-Sawdering Yankees get a queer lesson, whiles and again, when they come playing off their cunning dodges on our rough hoosiers and corn-crackers, they do."

The major's introduction smoothed the way for me immensely. Fine fellows, certainly, were many of the Ohio and Indiana farmers to whom he took me in the course of a couple of days spent in short trips up and down the river; but there was something rugged and stern in their bearing, and I could easily guess that they were quick to take umbrage. Their

wives and daughters, too, were strong in person and decided of speech, quite unlike the languid ladies of the towns. The whole population reminded me much more of the first hardy settlers in New England than the people of the Atlantic States had done.

My task was comparatively of a simple character. I had to buy, and with ready money. My kind adviser gave me a verbal tariff of prices, and before the thick pocket-book was emptied of its notes, I was master of more grunting herds of swine, of more casks of pickled pork, of more barrels of flour, apples, peaches, and Illinois pears, more sacks of maize, wheat and buck-wheat, than seemed enough to feed the people of a starving city. My next business was to arrange for sending these upstream. On this score I had my instructions, duly forwarded by Petter, Latch, and Jarman. I was to hire as many flats as might be necessary, and a tug-boat to tow them against the current to a certain landing-place in Virginia where an emissary of our firm would be in waiting, ready to superintend the transmission of the goods overland to Baltimore, where two schooners

were lying in readiness for their reception. So far, so good; but one thing puzzled me. It might have seemed natural that I should accompany or precede my purchases on their way to the north-east. Not so. I was expressly enjoined to remain in Ciacinnati until further orders reached me. It was obscurely hinted that my next mission might be one of increased importance, further south, and my salary might also be augmented, in token of the house's appreciation of my energy.

"There," said the major, as I concluded my bargain with the boatmen to whom the flats belonged, and as we smoked our cigars on the promenade deck of the steamer working up-stream—"there! Your business is over, and a good spec it will prove, if the Britishers pay well, for never were good mast and cob-fed grunterns bought for fewer cents a pound, and the flour's as sweet as a nosegay. A rough diamond that old Dan Wormald, the pig-merchant."

"He was, indeed," said I, as I recalled the gaunt grizzled countryman who still wore the uncouth attire of the early "pioneers," and

whose leathern hunting-shirt and boots of well-greased hide matched well with his horn-hafted knife and five-foot rifle; "he was, indeed, and one I should be very sorry to offend. What's the matter? Some one overboard?"

So indeed it was, as a shrill outcry of female voices announced, and there was a rush to the side of the vessel. It was a poor little black child, a girl of six, that had fallen overboard. We saw her frock of light-hued cotton, float for a moment on the surface of the turbid river, now flecked with white foam and boiling eddies, for the pilot had hastily called to reverse the engine. The father, a stunted ugly little man, with a basket of carpenter's tools at his back, was hanging over the rail forward, and screaming out passionate and incoherent entreaties that some one would "sabe Polly."

"Let every chap shoe his own hoss. River runs like a mill-swash," muttered a lean sallow-cheeked Yankee at my elbow. This seemed to be the general sentiment of the company, though two or three of the deck

hands bustled to launch the dingy, under the captain's orders. Just then I caught sight of the poor little frightened face coming to the surface again; there was no resisting the piteous childish eyes; and before I well knew that my mind was made up, I had flung my coat off, plunged into the yellow waves, and caught a firm grasp of the drowning child. I could swim well, but the current was strong, and I was swept down many yards, before the boat overtook me, yet the whole thing was over in a couple of minutes, and I was aboard again, dripping like a wet water-spaniel, and the steamer was under weigh, while the negro carpenter was hugging his little daughter in his arms, and almost deafening me with his clamorous thanks.


"There, my good man — there — it's all right. You are very welcome to the trifling service I rendered you—but pray don't do *that*," said I, as I tried to shake off the enthusiastic negro, who clung to my hand, and wanted to kiss my feet, and made himself and me ridiculous in the eyes of the white passengers.

“O massa, mas’r Britisher, Job thank you so, poor black rascal so ’bliged! Mas’r not know what Polly is now to Ole Job, de only joy of him life, ebber since him poor wife Dinah die, same year we run from Alabama plantation, sar, and Job carry child in ’um arms, all way, through swamp and——”

“Come, come, we can’t have this here. The child’s all right, barring a wetting. Get away down ladder to your own part of the boat!” said Major Pook, pushing the humble little man away, kindly but peremptorily. As the negro made a parting salute and shambled off to the portion of the steamer reserved for those of his colour, I saw that he was lame, and that even if he had been a swimmer (no common accomplishment in America), he could not have made the plunge overboard with any chance of rescuing the sufferer. As for myself, I had merely obeyed an instinctive impulse in hurrying to the aid of a helpless creature, white or black; and while I wanted no credit for an act of common humanity, I was a little annoyed by the sneering comments of some of the passengers,

who seemed to think me Quixotic for risking my own life for that of a "nigger brat." In half an hour we arrived at Cincinnati, where I changed my wet clothes. Having averted a cold, or a touch of fever, by taking a liberal supply of what the major called "brandy medicine," before quitting the packet, I was in no way the worse for my immersion.

Matters went on smoothly. The provisions, dead and alive, were duly shipped and sent up-stream, and, while awaiting fresh orders from Petter and partners, I received several invitations from the hospitable people of Cincinnati, and had no reason to complain of my position. Once or twice I happened to meet Job, the black carpenter, who was a dweller in one of the suburbs of the city, and I am afraid I was rather harsh in my decisive rejection of the poor little dusky fellow's proffered civilities. Job was very grateful, but his feelings prompted him to such ludicrous exuberance of homage and affection that I was compelled to shirk his society. A Briton is rarely pleased with any






public expression of sentiment ; and besides, I fear I was learning from the Americans around me to view the coloured race with something of their own contempt.

People in the Western States almost always dine early, and there was nothing extraordinary in Major Pook's asking me to dinner at two o'clock on the Saturday which followed the shipment of the provisions. Saturday, in Cincinnati, is always a busy day, as the market is sure to be thronged, and the country-folks to assemble in greater numbers than on other occasions.

I was not the only guest at the major's table. My earliest introducer, the editor of the Chillicothe Argus, was also there, as well as the Hon. Sampson Petty, one of the State representatives, and a family newly returned from a residence in Europe, and whose conversation turned wholly on the titled persons to whom "Our Minister" had introduced them. The ample meal was not half over, before a distant sound, heard above the clatter of wheels and the tramp of hoofs



in the street, struck on my ear. Nearer and nearer it came, gathering in strength and distinctness, swelling from a sullen hum into a dull roar, and mingled with the tread of many feet, fast approaching. The major heard it too, and laid down his knife and fork to listen.

"There must be a demonstration," said he, thoughtfully; "and yet it's not election time, neither."

At that moment the door opened, and a ragged Irish boy, who was retained to black shoes and run errands at the hotel where I lived, came bursting into the room.

"Mr. Hill, your honour," panted the breathless lad, "fly for't afore they surround the house. They'll show you no mercy, sure as my name's Mike Sullivan."

Everybody started, and a great clamour of questions commenced, which Mike answered merely by wringing his hands and exclaiming, "Wira, wira! 'tis murdered ye'll be, and I've most kilt myself scampering to warn ye. They've been to the hotel, and they're comin' here fast, and tare an' ages, if they cotch ye,

there'll be bitter work done, and you always spoke civil to Mike, so——”

But before Mike could finish his speech, and before I could even guess what had occurred, a tumultuous body of men, armed with guns, axes, crowbars, and other weapons, poured into the open space in front of the house, and advanced with loud shouts and excited gestures. At their head was old Daniel Wormald, flourishing his rifle high above his head, with his hard features swollen and distorted by fury.

“Some mischief has happened! The citizens have got their backs up, wild-cat fashion,” said my host, as he threw open the window and boldly demanded the cause of disturbance. There was a confused outcry.

“That’s Pook—hurrah for Pook!” cried one man, while another bawled out the threatening words, “Pook be scalped! He introduced the tarnation Britisher to us. Mebbe he’s to git a slice of the profits!”

“The Britisher! Give him up! Pitch him out! Or we’ll tatter the house like a

riddled pumpkin-rind!" shouted a score of others. I sprang to the window.

"Gentlemen——" I began. But my voice was drowned by the dreadful yells that greeted my appearance, and I instinctively recoiled, while old Wormald snatched an axe from one of the lumbermen in the crowd, darted forward, and struck a shower of blows on the polished mahogany of the door. The Honourable Sampson Petty was very white and nervous, and I heard him whispering to the major to "give me up," but before two minutes the door was driven in, and the mob, chiefly composed of angry countrymen, came pouring in. For some moments my life hung on a thread; I was roughly seized by many hands; my clothes were torn; I was struck, hustled, and bandied to and fro; nothing but the pressure of the throng kept me on my feet. But my host showed great courage and good sense, and was so firm and fearless in his reiterated demands for silence, that a short lull took place.

The major spoke up, the instant there was silence, asking "what harm" I had done.

"Robbed us!" responded Wormald, very grimly, and I felt his knotted fingers tighten as they twined themselves in my cravat; "robbed us! But we'll take it out of him in another way."

"I have never robbed you; never wronged you of a shilling," I gasped, half choked.

"Tell that to Judge Lynch!" answered a rough bargeman, aiming a blow at my bare head with the heavy crowbar he carried. Major Pook caught the man's arm, and warmly appealed to the crowd not to act like wild beasts, but to bring forward their accusation in a rational way.

"See here, Pook," said old Wormald, pulling out a roll of crumpled notes, "hyar's what your smooth-spoke friend hev paid me in, he hev. An' what he's done to me, he's done to all. Them fine white-fisted dandies of New York town, they must cheat hard-working Western men, must they, and pay for our substance in bogus notes, not fit to light a pipe!"

"Bogus notes! Forged notes! Do you mean to say those notes are forged?" cried

I; and I felt the blood rush to my face, and my brain reel.

"Yes, and you know it," cried one; while "Down-cast smasher," "British hound," and other flattering epithets, poured upon me in a shower, and it was in vain that I protested my innocence, since even Pook shrank from my side.

My tale was, indeed, improbable. It suited the angry mob better to believe me an accomplice of Petter & Co., whose villainous treachery now glared upon me, rather than to credit my being a dupe and scapegoat. They were all smarting from recent loss, and from the disgrace—always keenly felt in the West—of having been tricked; and the rugged hoosiers and corn-crackers vied with each other in fierce suggestions for my punishment.

"Lynch him! Tar and feather him! A ride on a rail, thirty-nine with a green cow-hide, and a dip in the Ohio!" roared one. "A rope! a rope! There's a lamp-post handy!" yelled a second; while Wormald malignantly declared that he had seen "row-

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dies burned for less," and that a halter was only too good for me.

In this crisis, Mrs. Pook saved my life. She alone seemed to believe in my innocence ; and she pleaded with a vigour that carried all before it. No other interference could have saved me ; but Americans of the roughest sort have a deference for "a lady;" and Mrs. Pook was especially popular with the mob, to several of whom her ready purse and well-stored medicine-chest had been useful in a time of poverty or fever. So it fell out that I was neither hanged nor cowhided, but merely dragged in the centre of a noisy and menacing crowd to the court-house ; where, to use the expression of the Honourable Sampson Petty, I was "given up to justice."

Muddy, ragged, and exhausted, with torn clothes and dishevelled hair, I must have presented a wretched spectacle when put to the bar, while the clamour of my rude accusers filled all minds with the very worst opinion of me. With some trouble, order was restored, and a detailed account of the transaction was rendered. The forged notes were produced

in court, and, being examined by experts, were unanimously pronounced to be "bogus," or counterfeits, though admirably executed. They were quite plausible enough in appearance to satisfy simple husbandmen, and it was only on market-day, when a number of them had been offered and refused at the banks of the city, that the cheat was detected.

Every face I looked round upon, was hostile and un pitying. Even those who had few scruples as to the morality of the transaction, evidently scorned me as a clumsy tyro, and viewed me as the Spartans did a convicted pilferer. I heard one man mutter to his friend that I was a "raw Britisher," and another remark that "'twas a smart idea, but I had fixed it awkward." However, though no one seemed to give the slightest credit to my explanation of affairs, the judge decided that, on technical grounds I must take my trial elsewhere than at Cincinnati. None of the goods had been purchased in the city; the fraud must be investigated and punished at the following assize in the county where the notes had been passed; and I must be confined in Madison jail for the present.



To Madison I was accordingly removed, in custody of the deputy-marshal and a party of police. My escort had no easy work in protecting me from injury during the passage from the court to the steam-boat; I was pelted, hustled, and threatened; and it was only by dint of much firmness and coaxing that the officers cleared the way. Even on board the boat, I was not free from persecution, for several of the farmers were on their return to Madison, where they resided, and among them Wormald, who never lost sight of me until he saw me thrust into the little wooden building on the swampy bank of the river, which served the township for a prison. His parting speech was not of a reassuring character.

“Look’ee, my fine bird,” said the old man, giving a sounding slap with his hard hand on the battered stock of his rifle; “I was loth to vex Madam Pook yonder, but don’t think to get off without paying for what ye done. Four-and-forty hogs, eighty bar’ls of apples, two hundred sacks of wheat, hev I lost by you, jest to be larfed at by your ’complices.

But unless the judges give you a good spell of Penitentiary, I'll right myself with a rugged bit of lead, Gospel sure! If you slip through the lawyers' hands, I'll hev blood for them hogs, or my given name is not Dan."

A very melancholy time did I pass in that Madison prison; no one came to see me, no one wrote to me; I seemed entirely cut off from human sympathy. True, I was wholly innocent, except of over-credulity, but that was only known to myself, and I could not right myself. All the profits of the affair had gone to my treacherous employers; all the suffering was mine. And it was a painful reflection that while my reputation was torn to rags, my liberty forfeit, and my life in peril, Hannibal Petter and the others were chuckling over the folly of their dupe as they divided the spoils. I grieved, too, for the hard-handed Western farmers whom I had unwittingly been the means of injuring, roughly though they had treated me.

The officials of the jail supposed me to be a rogue of the deepest dye, and gruffly requested me to keep my "innocent palaver"

for the assizes. They refused me writing materials, and would not carry messages for me, saying that I should have plenty of time to consult a lawyer when the time of my trial drew near. They were not unkind in other respects; I was well fed, as is commonly the case in that district of plenty, and was even favoured with the loan of a couple of old books, battered copies of some New England magazine, bound up. I had some hopes that I might be able to persuade the judges of my being blameless in the fraudulent business wherein I had been made a tool, but the jury of rugged Western men—I shuddered as I thought of their stubborn prejudices and revengeful spirit. And even if I were acquitted, I had no trifling ordeal to pass through. Judge Lynch might rectify what he would think the blunder of the legal courts; and Wormald and his rifle were no light make-weights to a verdict of “Not guilty.”

It was on the third evening of my imprisonment, as I was sitting alone in my cell reading the faded print of the old magazines by the light of a primitive lamp—the work of

some travelling tinker, and whose huge smoky wick was fed by a quantity of melted tallow—that I thought I heard the gnawing of a rat in the wall behind me. An active and bold rat, too, to tear with busy teeth so steadily and long. The creature annoyed me, for my nerves were irritable, and I tried to frighten it away by knocking on the unplanned planks with the stool on which I had been sitting. The gnawing ceased, and I heard nothing but the wash and murmur of the great river that flowed without. But after the turnkey had brought me my supper and locked me in for the night, the rat renewed his operations, though more cautiously, and for a long time the rasping and scratching continued.

It so happened that I had discovered a couple of old letters, yellow with age, between two leaves of my book, which had apparently been pasted together at the edges, and in these letters, ill-spelt and quaintly worded as they were, I had found something to interest me. They were love-letters, written in New England half a century back. Their old-fashioned raciness of diction was often amusing,

sometimes touching, so I read on, sorely puzzled to guess the meaning of some phrases, until my studies were interrupted by—

“Hi, mas’r! hist! dere no time to lose, sar.”

I looked round, to discover that a small square hole had been cut through the wall of rough-hewn timber, and that the ugly honest face of poor Job, the little negro carpenter, was peering through it. I started up, and could not restrain an exclamation of surprise. The black’s rolling eyeballs expressed alarm, and he pressed his finger on his lips.

“Mas’r sabe little Polly’s life, and Job owe mas’r a good turn. Britisher in jail; all him fine white friends desert ’um—Job one poor black rascal, but Job come to set mas’r free.”

And the little man began to work away with his saw, more vigorously than ever.

“My poor fellow,” said I, my heart smiting me as I remembered how unkindly I had repulsed the black’s uncouth gratitude; “I cannot avail myself of your generosity. I ought to take my trial, or they will say I am guilty, and——


“Mas’r talk what hab no sense in him. Dey all angry, fierce men, an’ will hab revenge, whether Britisher try cheat ’em or no. One day, dem cool down—all right; Job hear Mas’r Wormald and de rest, at tavern, talk ob not wait no more—too long to ’sizes—break prison-door and hang up Britisher on tree—Judge Lynch!”

Rasp, rasp, went the saw.

This news decided me that it would be fatal scrupulousness to await the result of a trial. I therefore accepted the saw which Job handed me through the aperture, and before long our combined efforts had made a sufficiently large hole to allow of my egress. Job hurriedly thrust back his tools into his wallet, and pricked up his ears as a distant noise reached him.

“Dis way, mas’r. Job hid de ole dug-out ’mong rushes. Yah! dem de Reg’lators for sartain. Quick, sar.”

Hastily we embarked in the little “dug-out,” or canoe, grasped the paddles, and shot out into the stream. As we did so, the sound of angry voices and crashing wood-work be-




came very distinct, and a flash of bright torch-light from every window proved that the excited rabble had burst into the little prison.

"Golly, mas'r, we only jest in time! Nebber care. Ole Kentuck not far off."

A few minutes' paddling bore us in safety across the broad river to the Kentucky bank. I was still dressed in the torn clothes in which I had been brought to Madison, but Job's thoughtfulness had provided a lumberman's coarse suit of blue blanket cloth, which was rolled up in the canoe, and which he insisted on my wearing as a needful disguise. He himself was to return straight to Cincinnati. He was confident that no one would know or suspect his share in my escape, the penalty of which, to one of his colour, would be burning alive, at the hands of the fierce populace.

I was miles away before dawn, walking rapidly south; by morning I found myself far from the Ohio, and approaching a town. Hungry and footsore, I was much in need of rest and refreshment, and now remembered



for the first time that I was penniless, having been deprived of my watch and purse on my confinement in the jail. Something heavy in the pocket of my blanket-coat attracted my attention, and on examination I found it to be a little heap of dollars, dimes, and cents, tightly twisted up in a scrap of some old newspaper—Job's parting gift—perhaps the poor black's whole savings. Thanks to Job, I was thus enabled to reach Lexington, where I found employment in a school. More than a year afterwards, I was in New York, and ventured to call on the merchant to whom my college friend had introduced me. I told him what had happened.

“Petter, Latch, and Jarman!” said he. “Why, my good Sir, their trial has been the excitement of New York for the last five days; the Herald and Tribune were full of it, but perhaps you don't care much for our high-pressure journals. At any rate, they are condemned to the ‘Tombs’ for life, and though Petter tried to prove an alibi, he failed entirely. They were sad rogues—made a science of forgery, and usually kept clear



of the dangers into which they pushed their victims. By-the-bye, Mr. Hill, there's a letter been lying here for you these three months, sealed with black wax."

The letter announced the decease of my uncle, and that, in a death-bed revulsion of feeling, he had made me his heir. Before quitting America I paid every cent due to the Western farmers: who sent me a sort of round robin, in which they fairly owned that I was freed from blame, and that they had been in error. I need not add, that my faithful friend, poor dear Job, was not forgotten in my hour of prosperity.

# WRECKED

ON

## ISLAND NUMBER TEN.

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“I CAN’T stand this any longer, Ned ; I shall turn out, and go on deck. This stifling heat is bad enough to bear, without the stings of the confounded mosquitoes. I could as soon sleep in a kiln with a blister all over me.”


I scrambled out of my berth, and huddled on my clothes as well as the dim light would allow. The other occupant of the little cabin, my dear old friend and kinsman, Ned Granger, merely yawned and stretched himself. Petty annoyances did not trouble him. He had

been sleeping as contentedly as if the villainous little den of a cabin close to the engine, which we had been talked into hiring on board the Van Buren, were a cool and airy bed-chamber. We had both been outwitted by the steam-boat clerk, a "smart citizen," who had assured us on his honour that the only disposable cabin left on board the Mississippi packet was a snug and pleasant one, free from bugs and cockroaches, and not in the least too hot. And now I was stewed and stung to the verge of fever, while Ned, whom nothing seemed to hurt, turned over on his pillow with a little sigh, murmuring, "Take it coolly, old chap. You'll forget the temperature and the gnats when we get to Cairo and have our breakfast ashore. Take it coolly."

I replied rather testily that I wished I could, but that, not being a salamander, I couldn't. And with this withering retort I left the cabin, and stumbled my way on deck. The hurricane-deck of an American river steamer is a gay scene by day, but it had a melancholy and lonely look as I saw it in the feeble moon-

light, bare and deserted. The pilot in his lofty wheelhouse, intent upon the helm and the bearings, and a solitary deck hand who filled the office of look-out, appeared to be the only human beings awake save myself. To be sure, from the hatchway of the engine-room there gushed at times a transient glare of dull crimson firelight, and a pitch-black figure crossed the gleam, while a sound as of the dull roaring of a caged wild beast, told that the furnace had been supplied with fresh wood. It was very hot and sultry, even in the air; but the atmosphere was endurable when compared with the oven-like oppression of the heat below. The mosquitoes were still troublesome, but I felt that I could bear their sharp stings better than when I lay in the close cabin.

I leaned over the side rail and gazed upon the yellow river, whose turbid waters stretched for an immense distance on either hand; the moon was new and pale, but I could make out the bold bluffs of the Tennessee shore, though the low-lying forest of the Missouri bank was hid in dark shadow.



" 'Tis lonesome here, mister, ain't it !" drawled out a nasal voice at my elbow. I could not help starting.

" I didn't mean to skear you, Mr. Barham," apologised the voice, which I now recognised as that of an American passenger, General Jeremiah Flint, who had taken a fancy to Ned Granger and myself, and with whom we had struck up a travelling friendship. General Flint was a thorough-bred Yankee, one of those tall lathy dark-browed down-easters who are found in active employment all over the Union. His complete history, of which he now and then favoured us with piquant scraps, would have been very amusing even in print, and partook a good deal of the adventurous ups and downs in the career of Hajii Baba. Just now the general was at rather a low pitch of the social see-saw, being on board the boat in no more exalted capacity than that of travelling salesman to a "jobber" of dry goods at Philadelphia. General Flint was not and never had been a military man. He had been postmaster-general of some small State, Vermont or Maine, and had retained the latter

and more portable half of his quondam official designation.

"It's kinder dull up here, but I couldn't sleep," said the new comer; "I've got it happened home upon my mind to-night that mischief's on the brew."

"On the *what*?" said I, laughing.

"On the brew, sir," answered the general, very solemnly. "Young men like you, Mr. Barham, are too apt to ridicule the presentiments of their elders, but Jeremy Flint's no greenhorn, and he don't relish the feel of matters."

I had observed before that the general was a little oracular, and, what may seem odder in a Yankee, slightly superstitious; but I knew he was a keen practical person who had seen ten times as much of the world as I, an ex-Oxonian of four-and-twenty, could possibly have done. Therefore, when my queer acquaintance seemed ill at ease, I strongly suspected that his prognostications of coming evil were based on other grounds than those of sentiment.

"I'll let you know, mister, the long and short

of it," said the Yankee, dropping his voice ; "this Van Buren we're afloat in, is an old craft, old and leaky, and clean wore out from her keelson to her b'iler, that's jest truth. The owners held a talk about giving her up, they did, a month ago, but old Barnabas Kyle, senior partner, said, Hold on—she's good for a voyage or two, and if she breaks up, the fixings are no loss—let her rip !"

"Do you mean to say that the owners have permitted this boat to sail, knowing she was unsafe ? If so, and harm happens, it is murder !"

The general nodded. "That's a European idea, sir. I don't say I approve of what old Kyle's done, but it's common enough. Still, this child wishes he were in his boots, and his boots ashore, *he* does."

And the American drummed the devil's tat-too on the side rail with his long bony fingers.

I asked whereabouts we were ? I knew that Flint was familiar with every bend of the river.

"We're past New Madrid," he answered,

scanning the shore line sharply ; “and we’re going mortal slow for all our puffing and straining. Let me see — that’s Red Bluff on the Tennessee bank, and yon dark line on the larboard must be Island Number Ten.”

As if the words had been the sounds of some fearful spell, there was, at that instant, a roar as loud as the roar of a hundred cannon, a crash of breaking timber and riven iron-work, and the deck was torn into splintered fragments, while fire, shattered beams, and scalding vapour, came spouting up as from a volcano. I was struggling with the cold waters of the Mississippi, which bubbled and hissed in my ears, as the strong current sucked me down stream. What had happened I hardly knew. I was stunned and deafened, but I fought for life with mechanical energy, and, being able to swim, could just keep myself above the surface. My wet clothes and boots embarrassed me, and the stream was too strong to be resisted ; but, just as I felt myself being swept away like a leaf upon the river, I jostled against a floating mass of wood-work, and clutched it.



"Give me your fingers, whoever you air," cried a familiar voice, and a strong hand caught my wrist. "Mr. Barham, by all that's airthly! Wall, I'm glad to see you alive, Britisher. Get hold of the beam, and scramble up where I am."

General Flint assisted me to crawl to the top of the floating timber, where he sat at ease, with his feet dangling in the water.

"Tain't first time this child has seen a b'iler bust. Apple quiltings! I thought it would be a final smash! The notions I was taking back to Philadelphia were all well insured, that's one comfort, and my notes are in my waistband."

"Boiler bust! Then the boiler did burst, and we are alone! The rest of us? Ned Granger?"


"There's not much moon, but you may make out the hull of the steamer afloat yet," said the Yankee; "what's left of her, a drifting like a floating coffin. If there's any living human being aboard her—drowning will be welcome, after the misery they're in,

I guess. The water and steam did scald, I reckon !”

A dull pain in my hands attracted my notice. I looked down and could see that they were swollen and red. I remember that I had grasped the side rail at the moment of the explosion, and I had no doubt that I had been partially injured by the dash of heated water, from which Flint seemed wholly to have escaped.

I do not recollect what followed. I heard Flint’s voice very indistinctly—a mere humming of meaningless words—and I rocked to and fro, from weakness. My brain reeled. Then I grew sick and faint, and I remember being in deadly fear lest I should tumble off the spar. I remember, too, trying to call to my companion for help, but failing to speak intelligibly. And then I remember no more until I was lying on a heap of brush-wood ashore, and Flint was insinuating between my lips some drops of whisky from a metal flask.

“Cheer up, Britisher; you’ll do now. It kinder came over you,” said the good-natured



Yankee, lifting the flask to his own lips, and imbibing several sups of the cordial.

I gave his hand a feeble squeeze.

"I owe you my life; but where are we? And Ned—are any saved?"


The Yankee shook his head. "We're on Island Number Ten, that's where *we* air. Jest after you gave in, we grounded, and I got a grip of a snag sticking out of the mud, and we're on dry airth again. If you're strong enough, mister, we'd best look for a shelter, for 'tain't wholesome to lie out, so far south."

I was bruised and weak, and my hands were very painful, but I could walk pretty well. We made our way across a sort of swampy meadow, the general talking rapidly and continually, in his kindly wish to divert my thoughts from the sad fate of my gallant cousin. I gathered from him that the island had no permanent inhabitants, but was occasionally frequented by ferrymen, flat-men, and others, at the particular seasons when their trades were in full activity. General Flint scarcely fancied that we should

find any living possessors of this dreary spot ; but he made no doubt we should discover some log-house in tolerable repair, where we could pass the night.

“And in the mornin’, mister, we’ll signal a steam-boat and get picked off. No fear of our playin’ Robinson Crusoe too long here, I guess. We’ll have a banyan breakfast, but our appetite for dinner will be a caution to alligators. Ah! here’s a convenient location.”

In effect, we were on the threshold of a large and substantial log-house, behind which we could dimly discern the outlines of other buildings. The heavy door was ajar, and yielded sullenly to our push. We entered. The interior was, of course, quite dark, but a feeble red glow, proceeded from some dying embers on the hearth, proving that human beings had been there within a few hours. The general showed no surprise. He merely observed that a timber flat, bound for New Orleans, had probably run aground on the island, and wished the men had remained, that they might have given us a cast ashore in their broadhorn. He stooped, blew the



embers to a glow, laid on dry brush and fresh wood, and soon the hut was illuminated by a cheery glare. It was large, in good repair, and contained an old table of unbarked wood, and several broken barrels which had probably served for seats. There were shelves nailed up, but they were empty, nor were any provisions visible. But in an inner recess, half partitioned off from the larger apartment, were several heaps of brushwood and flowery grasses: beds not to be despised when mattresses and pillows were out of the question. I do not suppose that Jeremiah Flint had ever heard of the French proverb, *Qui dort dîne*, but he showed some sagacity in remarking that when asleep, our foodless and comfortless state would be less vexatious. We dried our clothes before the large fire, and prepared to obtain such repose as we might, in the inner compartment of the cabin. General Flint had been, in the course of his adventurous life, accustomed to queer sleeping-places, and it was with a grunt of satisfaction that he adjusted his bony frame to the heaps of withering brush.

"Pull some o' them sassafras boughs over your face, mister : that's the way to cheat the skeeturs," said he ; " we'll have a good long nap, and wake up in time to hoist a handkerchief on one of those hemlocks down by the water-side. If a steamer don't see it, a flat-boat may."

I lay still a few moments, and then rolled restlessly from side to side. My nerves were strung to a painful tension, and my brain was too active to allow sleep to visit me. The accident, with all its horrors, rather imagined than actually seen, was ever before my eyes, but it seemed unreal and unnatural, a vivid nightmare rather than a sad reality. Poor Ned Granger, too ! What sad news to carry home to the quiet Devonshire rectory, where father, mother, and sisters, were hopefully awaiting his return ! To die so early, and by a death so horrible and abrupt—how should I ever dare to tell it ? Poor dear Ned, who saved my life once, who had done me fifty kindnesses, with whom I had never exchanged an angry word. Where should I

ever again in life find such a friend as that early one, now lost?

How long I mused I cannot tell, but I was startled by a sound which broke the stillness of the night—a very odd sound to be heard on Island Number Ten—the neigh of a horse, I shook off my reverie, and half raised myself to listen. The sound was not renewed, but so sure was I that it had been no cheat of fancy that I determined to rouse my companion and solve the doubt. It was not until I had shaken Flint, who was a heavy sleeper, that he woke up, grumbling.

“Jerusalem, mister, what’s afloat? Not a b’ar swum across, sure-ly.”

“No,” said I, rather ashamed, “only the neighing of a horse, close at hand.”

“Unpossible — couldn’t be! There’s no horse beasts here. What should they be doing on the island? You must have been dreaming, Mr. Barham.”

The general yawned and sank back into the pile of brushwood, nor was it long before his heavy breathing announced that he was fast

asleep. I was far from convinced, but I was puzzled ; imagination, I knew, does often play us strange tricks. Besides, was it not possible that a horse had neighed on shore, on either the left or right bank, and that my ear, perhaps unusually acute after the excitement of the night, had caught and exaggerated the distant sound. I pondered yet awhile, but I was weary ; gradually my nerves relaxed, my eyelids became heavy, and I sank into deep slumber. Not so deep, however, but that my dreams were stirring and various, changing like the shifting patterns of a kaleidoscope. One dream was particularly distinct. I have forgotten it now, but I know that a conversation between ideal personages attracted my fullest attention, and that by degrees this conversation grew more and more real and audible.

“ I don’t care a cuss how it kept alight,” said some one ; “ jist clap on a kipple more sticks, and I’ll blow up the kindlers.”

Directly afterwards I heard the familiar noise—familiar, at least, to one fresh from prairie travel—of somebody blowing the



embers of a fire into a blaze, while the sharp crackle of burning wood succeeded.


"Where's Stone's marm?" asked some one else, in a high cracked voice, that contrasted with the deep tones of the first speaker; "where's the old critter got to, I admire! I'm as starved, for one, as any wolf, and there's never a scrap to eat until she briles the meat. Ten hours' work makes a man peckish; and we must clear out of this before day."

Vaguely the thought dawned in my half-unconscious mind that I was no longer asleep, and that the words I heard were real words, spoken by beings of flesh and blood. I opened my eyes. The larger compartment of the log-house was suffused with dull red light, which brightened into a clearer glow as the wood, heaped on the fire with a lavish hand, caught the ascending blaze. Around this fire were grouped five or six men, most of whom wore the red flannel shirts and coarse homespun of the regular Mississippi working garb, though one was in a suit of rusty black, of city make. Several more

dark figures hovered about the open doorway, going and coming, bringing bags and barrels, which were received by two of the men within. Boatmen, thought I, who had probably put in for a safe haven when benighted on the rapid and dangerous river. I was preparing to accost them, when a shrill neighing, unmistakably that of a horse this time and close by, was answered as shrilly and distinctly by an equine companion.

"Darn them brutes! pinch their nostrils, you loafing dunces! or, if a steamer goes by, the place will be blown upon," said a deep and fierce voice from the hut. And a man whom I had not observed, sprang up from a sitting posture and strode across the illuminated space. I rubbed my eyes, and cautiously raised myself on my elbow.

The last speaker was of gigantic stature, with a fell of shaggy black hair tumbling on the collar of his red woollen shirt; his face was a stern and forbidding one, like that of some robber soldier in a Flemish picture; he wore a pistol and a bowie-knife, ostentatiously




displayed, in the black leather belt around his waist.

“ All right, captain ! ’twas that rampaging black beast, Jem Hudson’s colt, that got loose a minit,” answered a man from without ; and very soon several men and two or three women entered the log-house. Most of the new comers were ruffianly figures, with the brass-bound handles of knives or pistols peeping out of their pockets, or protruding from the breasts of their homespun coats ; but one or two had the air of educated men, though their keen faces showed traces of evil passions and evil habits. One old man—he must have been more than sixty—was well dressed in the unpretending garments of a respectable Western farmer, and his weather-beaten but mild face contrasted with the ferocity and recklessness of the countenances around him. The man with the high cracked voice, who wore a town-made suit of dilapidated broad-cloth, accosted this new comer as Mr. Stone, and asked if his wife intended to give the company any supper or not ?

“ The mississ is comin’ in : you’d best ask

her," said the old farmer, philosophically lighting his pipe. Mrs. Stone, a tall bony virago, here bustled forward to answer for herself, which she did by telling the hungry querist that he was "a greedy, cowardly, troublesome, turkey-buzzard of a Yankee, and that he had better have been helping to caché the horses and unload the boats, than calling for food as if he was in some fine city hotel."

While thus upbraiding the man in black—who indeed seemed to hold a very low position in the esteem of his comrades—Mrs. Stone bustled furiously to and fro, and before long a great frying-pan, full of pieces of pork, was sputtering on the fire, while several junks of beef and venison were broiling on impromptu spits made of ramrods stuck in the soft clay of the floor. Mrs. Stone was aided in these culinary processes by a pretty modest-looking girl of eighteen, whose pale sad face looked out of keeping with the place and company, and whom I discovered to be her eldest daughter. A younger girl, about fourteen years of age, looked on from the outer circle. I no longer felt the slightest inclination to address



the members of this group, and hardly knew in what light to consider them. I could form no guess as to their calling or object, but I instinctively cowered down among the branches and hid myself from observation. I felt that something was amiss, and that discovery might lead to awkward results. General Flint was asleep, but I feared that every moment he might awake and utter some exclamation, while it was always possible that his heavy breathing might draw the attention of some sharp-eared member of the band. Some of the party had seated themselves on barrels or logs, with every sign of fatigue, but the rest stood watching the pork as it bubbled in the pan, and the steaks browning before the fierce fire. Several voices were speaking at once, and I only caught unconnected scraps of the talk.


"Jem Hudson was terrible riled. He set such a vally on that colt. If his gun hadn't had too much powder in it, this child would have been a gone coon, I guess."

"I think Hiram Stout's a deal uglier than Jem. He owes us a grudge, he does, I reckon Tennessee's gettin' too hot to hold us."

"Keep your opinion till it's axed for, green-horn," said the big man who had been addressed as captain, and who spoke in a tone of bullying authority. "This nigger don't need a Pennsylvania chicken to tell him when a melonsquash is squeezed dry."

"Here's your victuals ready, and no lady in Illinoy State could have fixed 'em better, nor yet slicker," exclaimed Mrs. Stone, in an argumentative manner, as if to challenge contradiction. But nobody picked up the gauntlet. A circle was formed, some walnut-wood platters and pewter pannikins were produced from a hiding-place, the company drew their bowie-knives, and Mrs. Stone carried round the frying-pan, in order that every one might help himself; while her two daughters followed, one with the steaks still stuck upon the iron-tipped ramrods, the other with some lumps of "corn-bread" in a basket.

It was at this moment that I felt my wrist cautiously grasped by a set of long lean fingers, and could hardly repress an exclamation, when, looking round, I saw that Jeremiah Flint was awake, and had risen to a kneeling position,



keeping at the same time well behind the screen of brushwood,

“It’s well I woke. We’re in a fix, mister, we air.” I looked round. I could see by the faint light that my companion’s resolute face was very pale. “Very bad this—wuss than scalding water, mebbe; we’ve got into the den of a grizzly, mister; and if we carry our scalps out, we may be thankful a few.”

I began to be seriously alarmed. I was yet in ignorance as to the true character of those on whose bounds we seemed to be unwitting trespassers, but I knew that Flint, who had spent years in the wild West, had a stout heart, and that his apprehensions were not likely to be roused without reason.

“I know more than one of ’em, Mr. Barham,” whispered the general; “that tall fishrod of a man in the tail-coat, comes from Concord, Mass.: he was a regular penitentiary bird, he was. That German rogue in the cap, is Fritz Vogel, who was nigh hanged at Chicago last fall. And—may I never!—but that big chap in the red shirt—the captain—turns out to be Black Dave.”

“ Black Dave ? ”

“ Ay, Black Dave, or David Jossam, the most e-tarnal thief ! Famous for stealing horses, coining bogus dollars, robbing stores, and breaking out of prison. Last time I saw him was at Little Rock, Arkansas, in the Supreme Court, under trial, and but for a rogue of a lawyer —— ”

Here my friend's reminiscences were cut short by the abrupt question, put by a gentleman whose mouth was very full, and who had a huge clasp-knife in one hand, and a pound or two of beef in the other : “ Captain Dave, when are we to paddle over with them hosses ? ”

“ We'll see about it,” answered the chief. “ Some one must go over to scout fust. I expect the brutes will be a nation deal safer when they git into Missouri, and out of sight of the river.”

These words were a revelation. The general pressed my elbow. “ They're horse-thieves, mister.”

This announcement of the quality of our unconscious hosts was by no means calculated to dissipate my apprehensions. I listened



nervously enough, to an animated debate which now ensued among the members of the gang, as to the propriety of hurrying over the stolen horses to the Missouri shore, or of lying concealed for some days, until the first fury of the pursuers should be baffled and spent. Opinions varied. The only person of the male sex who took no part in the argument, was the old farmer-looking man whom I had heard addressed as Mr. Stone. He sat quiet, having finished his meal and resumed his pipe, and we could see nothing but his respectable-looking grey head, and the silvery wreath from his soapstone meerschaum, inasmuch as his face was towards the outer door. Mrs. Stone, his better half, took an active part in council, urging a stay on the island, since there had been "nothing but scurrying here and stampeding there for weeks, and her darters were worried and worn out with it." It was curious, but this notable woman's character appeared little if at all changed by lawless companionship and outlaw life. In the midst of robbers she was still the shrewish, hard-working house-wife, and I could see no

remorse written on her parchment cheeks. With her daughters it was different. The eldest was evidently melancholy and ill at ease. She sat a little apart, never replied save with a monosyllable to any remark or rough compliment, and her downcast eyes and colourless face told of regrets and scruples that her mother did not share. The younger girl showed the same mental condition, but in a minor degree. Her answers were short but pert, and she occasionally exploded into a giggle at some jocular sally of the Massachusetts man, or the German, who were the wits of the assembly. But one glance from her sister's sad dark eyes checked her rising spirits, and she subsided into gloom again. We listened with considerable interest to a discussion which materially affected our safety ; but over which we could exercise no influence whatever. We gathered from the discourse that another hut existed, not far off, which was assigned to the Stone family, but that the rest of the association had no residence on the island save the log-house in which we were concealed, and no couches but those heaps of brush and

flowering grasses on which we were growing fearfully uneasy. The horses, we also learned, were hidden hard by, in a cache dug where the scrub grew thickest, and which was effectually masked from careless eyes by a sort of broad trap-door of osier work and sassafras boughs. Here it was customary to conceal them—they were all stolen from owners in Tennessee until an opportunity occurred for transporting them to Bolivar or Greenville, in Missouri, where certain accomplices of the band resided, whence they were sent to St. Louis, to be sold to emigrants bound for California.

Very unwillingly did we thus acquire possession of the secrets of those desperate men, every fresh admission or unguarded word serving to increase our danger, until at last we heard with dismay the final award of Black Dave, the captain.

“We’ll jest stop. This location’s good, and nobody knows of it [we trembled], and, as Marm Stone says the gals are tired some, and we’ll all be the better for rest. So we’ll jest keep close for a few days, and then ab-

squotilate with the hosses, and scurry for Bolivar."

There was a growl of assent, overtopped by the shrill voice of Mrs. Stone, who clamourously expressed her approval. I glanced at the general's face. It was white but firm; and the compressed lips and brightening eye told of a new resolve.

"It's a bitter pill, sir, 'tis, but we must gulp it," he whispered; "we must give ourselves up, and the sooner the better. It will go harder with us if we were found cachéd, than if we come out bold."

This was logical, but startling. I demurred for an instant, suggesting the possibility of our making our way out at the back of the cabin by cutting a hole with our knives in the comparatively thin roof. But our deliberations were unexpectedly cut short. Up to this time the party had contented themselves with eating and reposing, but now a huge can of water and some lemons and sugar and some fresh sprigs of mint were produced, and a cry was set up for whisky.

"Where did you stow away the stone jars with the Monongahela, Marm Stone?"

Mrs. Stone replied that the jars were "under the brush of the beds," and bade the Massachusetts man fetch them. He rose at once, took up a pine torch, lighted it, and advanced. "Now," cried Jeremiah, rising to his feet; and we both stepped out into the lighted circle, causing the startled bearer of the torch to drop the blazing brand in his surprise.

"Dog-gone it all," yelled one of the gang, "the Philistines are on us!"

With wild shouts and curses, the ruffians scrambled up and clutched their weapons.

"Huroo, boys, it's only two spy varmints!" thundered Black Dave, who was really a bold villain; "kim back, you down-east coward, you! And you Dutch cur (for the Massachusetts man and the German were already in full retreat), they air but two, and without weapons."

When they were certain of this last reassuring fact, the more timorous of the robbers became almost beyond restraint in their blood-

thirsty fury. Pistols and bowie-knives menaced us on every side, and it was with some trouble that the captain prevented our summary extermination. Black Dave, however, was firm. By his orders our wrists were tightly bound together with handkerchiefs, and we were placed in the centre of a circle of hostile faces and threatening revolvers, and bidden to confess.

“Speak up, ye skunks, who air ye?”

In answer to this query, the general gave a succinct and graphic account of the steam-boat accident, of our escape and immersion, of our landing on the island, and of how we happened to fall asleep in the log house and become the involuntary auditors of the robbers’ council, though this point was rather lightly touched upon. A bellow of fierce incredulity answered this statement.

“Cut out the lyin’ snake’s tongue!” bawled one.

“Murder ’em both, the oily spoken slippery-skinned Yankee eels,” cried another, flourishing his glittering knife within an inch of my nose, while two pistol-barrels were pressed to

the forehead of the unflinching Jeremiah.

"Hold a bit, gentlemen," said Black Dave. "Out with the truth, ye skulking crawlers! Who sent you? Air ye State police, or mere informers? You, specially, with the Connecticut phiz and satin waistcoat. Hev'nt I seen your ugly features before? What's your name?"

"I dare say you have seen me before. I am General Jeremiah Flint, of New England, and I ain't ashamed of parentage nor raising," replied the general.

There was a murmur. Three or four of those present knew the general by repute or by sight. The Massachussets man observed that "Flint was a hypocrite, that passed for doing things on the square." The German abused him for a "schelm," who had ill-treated an acquaintance of his at Memphis: which accusation afterwards resolved itself into the fact that Flint had broken the arm of a bully who had tried to gouge him. Two other men had heard that Flint was "a cute chap," and had been soft-hearted enough to

help more than one person they had known, and who had been ruined and half-starved in the South.

All this time Black Dave, with an ominous frown on his dark brows, had stood toying with the lock of his revolver, making the hammer play up and down between his strong fingers, and tapping the bullets that lay in each charged chamber. Presently he fixed his keen eyes on the steady eyes of the principal captive. I say principal, because I attracted little or no attention, being quite unknown.

"Last time we met," said Dave, deliberately, "you and me, Jeremiah Flint, you sat on the bench along with the sheriff and the squires, and I stood in the dock. Now times air altered. I am judge, now, and by all that's airthly, I'll hev justice. You say you're no spy. That mebbe true; but how if we let you go to the next town——"

"You'll never be such a 'tarnal fool, captain," said a bystander.

I took the opportunity of eagerly and solemnly assuring the outlaw that he had no-



thing to fear from our indiscretion. We would be silent, until silence could no longer be necessary.

"Shut your mouth, Britisher," said Dave, roughly, and instantly resumed. "Gineral, you must die. It goes agin me to kill in cold blood, but it's our law, and unless we'd all be strung up to trees by the Reg'lators of Tennessee, we must silence you for sartin." Dave lifted his pistol, and pointed it at the forehead of poor Flint, who gave a slight shudder, and then stood firm.

"I'll settle the other sneek," said a brawny boatman, cocking his revolver, and grasping my collar.

"I'll count twenty slow," said Dave. "If you've got religion, you can mumble a prayer; and you, too, Britisher, for, when I get to twenty, I crook my claw."

The boatman's pistol was pressed to my ear. The muzzle felt icy cold, like the touch of death's hand. My arms were bound, and all resistance impossible.

"One," began Dave.

The face of old Stone was contorted for a

moment, as by a twinge of pain, and he let his pipe go out, unheeded, but said nothing. The girls were sobbing in a corner, and Mrs. Stone was apparently urging them, in a whisper, to withdraw.

The robber captain continued to count. "Two, three, four, five."

Such a scream ! Mary Stone broke from her mother who sought to detain her, threw herself on her knees at Black Dave's feet, and began to beg our lives with an incoherent energy and a passionate sobbing and outpouring of words that it was painful to hear. This girl, usually so quiet and depressed, was now fully roused by the horror of the cruel deed about to be done. She wept and clung to Dave's brawny arm, and supplicated for mercy : mixing her entreaties with broken Scriptural phrases and incautious censures on the lawless life and pursuits of the band. But the chief, though startled, was not softened. He shook off the weak hands that grasped his.

"Marm Stone, take off your darter, and leave me to settle accounts with the spy.

Men ain't to be twisted round, like milksops, by a useless screechin gal. You've made me lose my count, young one, but I'll pick it up by guess. *Twelve!*"

But scarcely had he levelled the weapon when Mrs. Stone advanced, and boldly beat it down.

"I've been a puzzlin' my brains," said the virago, "to recklect the man, and if he's him I think, he shan't die. None of your ugly frowns at me, cap.; Bessy Stone's not the woman to be frit by black looks. Warn't you Jeremiah Flint, once the actuary chap of the Boston Argus Life and Fire Company?"

"Yes, I was," said Flint.

"Of course!" sneered the German maliciously.

"We'll prove that," returned Mrs. Stone. "'Tis long years ago, but can you remember going to a village, nigh Lexington, to see a farm-house and barns belonging to a farmer that had been burnt out, and the comp'ny suspected 'twas done a purpose, and were shy to pay the policy thing?"

"Stay a moment," said Flint, pondering;

"the farmer's name was Burke, and the village was Brentsville, Mass."

"All right!" screamed the audacious virago, positively wrenching the revolver from between Dave's murderous fingers; "one good turn deserves as good, and as sure as my name's Bessy Stone, and was Bessy Burke, the man that saved my old dad from being ruined, root and branch, shan't be shot dog fashion—and you, Stone, if you're a man you'll say so too."

The old farmer, who had evidently the highest reverence for his wife's judgment, rose from his seat, picked up the rifle that had laid beside him, and composedly sounded the barrel with the tough ramrod.

"The bit of lead's in its place!" he said, in his phlegmatic way, and stood still, but ready for action. A violent quarrel ensued; oaths, threats, and hard words were freely bandied to and fro; but four of the least villanous-looking of the gang took the side of mercy, and Mrs. Stone's dictum obviously carried great weight with it. Her bitter tongue and the masculine energy of her character,

coupled with the respect habitually paid to females in America, had made her a potentate in the association: while her husband, though slow of wit, was known to be a brave man and a first-rate judge of a horse. The end of the matter was, that our lives were spared, but that it was decided that we should be kept prisoners until the evacuation of the island. We were accordingly placed in a sort of underground magazine, where forage was stored, and within a few inches of the pit in which the horses were concealed, and to which access was obtained by a drawbridge of stout planking.

Our bonds were slackened, but not removed, and we were made to give our parole not to attempt to escape until the horse-thieves should quit the island. Mrs. Stone, to whose capricious gratitude we owed our lives, was not unkind to us in her rugged way; and she and her daughters supplied us with food and blankets, and sometimes deigned to descend and converse with us, besides lending us one or two well-thumbed books, which constituted the family library.

In the course of these conversations the apparent enigma of the connexion between the Stones, who seemed decent folks, and the utter villains who composed the gang, was solved. Old Stone had been a hard-working farmer in Illinois, illiterate, but respectable and honest in deed and thought. Unluckily, he had invested his hard-earned savings and the price of his own farm in the purchase of a tempting bargain of landed property, with a fatal flaw in the title. The knavish vendor had fled, and the honest dupe, assailed by a lawsuit, had been stripped of all, and had found himself a beggar. Unhappily, Mrs. Stone was a woman of strong will, and a warped and one-sided judgment. She passionately declared that as the law had robbed them of their earnings, the law was their enemy, and a mere device for oppression. Anger blinded her; she was ashamed to live poor where she had been well to do, and in the cities of the South the exiled families soon picked up associates whose whole life was one war with society.

It was impossible to make Mrs. Stone com-

prehend that she was really a transgressor in sharing the perils and profits of wholesale plunder. She had got to regard all judges, governors, lawyers, and men of reputed honesty, as rogues, in league, to pillage the simple; and she considered the work in which the horse-thieves were engaged as reprisals and warfare. Her husband, long used to obey the shrewd and violent woman who had attained such dominion over him, only saw through his wife's eyes. I believe the couple had some vague idea of buying land in Oregon or California, and setting up "on the square," when they should be rich enough—a hope which has lured on many a half-reluctant criminal. The daughters, on the other hand, less prejudiced and better taught, since they had picked up some instruction in a tolerable school in Chicago, saw nothing but misery and degradation in the companionship to which they were condemned. They passed their lives in sighing over the old days and the innocence of their life in Illinois, and never willingly exchanged a word with the outlaws.

"I'll tell you what, Mr. Barham," said the general to me one day, "I'd like to give a lift out of the mire to them Stones. They've saved the lives of us both, for gospel truth, and my heart aches to think of their bein' caught one day, the old man hung, the woman locked up for life, and the daughters driven out to come to want, or worse. I'm not rich, no more, I suspect, air you; but land's not dear up in Oregon, nor yet in Californy, and between us we might buy 'em a farm, and let 'em live honest, and repent when grace was borne in upon 'em. A farm would be jest heaven to 'em, and three thousand dollars would buy and stock it in a small way."

I willingly agreed, and we quietly settled with Mary Stone, who was wild with joy at the idea, that a certain sum should be lodged, two months hence, in the Bolivar bank, in her name. She agreed that it was best to communicate this to her mother after the migration of the band. This was soon to occur. We had been prisoners for a fortnight, when one morning we were informed that a general

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flitting was at hand, and our release imminent.

With much snorting and trampling, the horses were led up from the cache, and embarked on board two flat boats, which were to be towed across by two broadhorns, while a third followed with the rest of the party. Dawn was just breaking, no steamer was in sight, no wreath of filmy wood-smoke was on the horizon. Once on the Missouri bank, safety would be easily secured, since the depredations had been confined to Tennessee. We were allowed to come out of our prison, and found ourselves, blinking like owls in the daylight, on the margin of the turbid water. The first flat boat, full of horses, was towed off by a broadhorn pulling six oars. The two girls and their father were in the stern-sheets, but Mrs. Stone lingered, lest the German, or Black Dave might do us, as she said, "a mischief at parting." But the captain was in good humour. He patted us on the back, laughing heartily, and advised us to "stick to Broadway pavement and Philadelphia park, onst we got there."

The last horses were embarked, and the rowers of the broadhorn settled themselves on the benches and grasped their oars. "All aboard, quick, boys!"

"Stay," said Black Dave, looking round, "where's that Massachusetts bird?"

Nobody knew. One said he was in the first boat. Another denied this. No one had seen him since the previous evening. Black Dave ground his teeth, and muttered a deep curse.


"He's deserted, the cur! To git the reward them Reg'lators offered!"

"He's stole the third broadhorn. It's gone!" cried a panting scout, running up.

There was a moment of suspense, then a rush, and the remaining boat was so crowded that it was sunk gunwhale deep in the water. The captain, rifle in hand, stood up in the stern-sheets.

"Pull all! I hear the dip of oars!"

Flash! went the six oars into the water, and off went the heavily-laden boat, towing the flat with the horses. The progress was necessarily slow. But a few yards had been



gained, before a loud outcry proved that the island was invaded. We were still standing on the shore, waving our hands to Mrs. Stone, whose hard face had relaxed into a smile, and who seemed heedless of the danger.

“Hurrah! Bang at ’em boys—there the villains air!” bawled fifty voices, and a crowd of armed men in gaily fringed hunting-shirts or homespun suits, well armed, came at a run through the bushes. “Down!” cried Flint, throwing me to my knees and stooping himself, just in time to escape death, as the rifle-balls whizzed over us. I looked up. I saw Black Dave drop on his knees, fire his gun, rise again, stagger, and finally roll over into the river, mortally wounded by the discharge. No one else was hit. Cutting the tow-rope and crouching down as much as possible, the outlaws managed to escape further harm, and abandoning their plunder, reached the Missouri shore.

We were at first roughly handled, and were even in some danger of being promptly hanged or shot by order of Judge Lynch,

when two witnesses to character came forward. One, on whom we looked with disgust, was the treacherous scoundrel who had betrayed the rest of the gang for gold; the other, wonder of wonders, was—Ned Granger, who caught me in his arms and hugged me like a bear!

“Dear Ned, I thought you were dead.”

“That’s exactly what I thought of you, Barham, dear old boy, and of the general there. No, I was very little hurt, and was able to help the other uninjured passengers in caring for those poor creatures who were scalded or torn by the explosion. Every house is like a hospital. Ah! it was a shocking business. But though unhurt, you see, I had lost my luggage and my money in the crash, and this honest farmer here has taken care of me these last weeks. So I came to help him to get back his stolen nags, little thinking whom I should find on Island Number Ten.”

Flint and I kept our word with Mary Stone.

## THE SUB-SURVEYOR.

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It was a provoking thing, in the first place, when young Parkes fell ill. We were weak-handed, so far as the staff was concerned, on our section, the Lublin section, of the new line. Those were the early days, too, of railways in Poland, and the life of an engineer was not exactly spent upon rose-leaves. Parkes was invalided and went home to England, and for a good while the whole work devolved on me. I like work, and I did my best to work out the South Polish to the satisfaction of my employers; but it was really too much for one pair of eyes and one pair of hands. The native "navvies" required as much coaxing and attention as so many children. What with red letter days

that were terribly frequent in their traditional almanack ; what with wedding feasts, unlucky days, and so on, I could seldom reckon on downright labour in exchange for actual wages. They were strapping fellows, kind, polite, and full of winning ways and the petty courtesies of life, but sure to drop the spade, and light their smuggled cigars, unless they were watched. And who was to watch them? not John Shaw, civil engineer, at any rate. He had too much correspondence to conduct, since the line was partly paid for by a government subsidy, and the imperial bureaux kept up a heavy fire of letters, all of which had to be replied to categorically, in the best French at my disposal. There was other necessary labour than this pen and ink work. Even surveying was difficult, since the labourers crossed themselves at the proposal to assist me with my apparatus, and briefly gave me to understand that they regarded my instruments as "magical," and had rather, in consequence, refrain from meddling with them. But for a shrewd Armenian pedlar, who gave

me some help, I should have been brought to a stand-still, and, as it was, my progress was slow.

It was with much satisfaction, therefore, that I received a letter from the contractors in London, announcing that a fresh sub-surveyor was on his way to my assistance, and assuring me, that Mr. Patrick O'Dwyer had been most highly recommended on the score of merit and experience. In a day or two Mr. O'Dwyer arrived, a well-built, well-looking young fellow, with dark hair and eyes, and a blue scar across his right cheek that looked suspiciously like the mark of a sabrecut. When we reached Podlowitz, the wretched hamlet where our huts were pitched, he alighted from the drosky, and came straight into the little wooden dwelling where I was paying wages to the men. He held out his hand to me, taking off his travelling cap with a frank bright smile. There was an "Obermann" present, a sort of sub-contractor, whom in England we should call a "ganger," and this man started forward with a smothered cry the instant his

eyes lit on the young Irishman, and seemed about to kneel at his feet.

“Hilloa! Theodore, what on earth are you dreaming of?” cried I, in surprise; but the new comer looked at the peasant quite coldly, without moving a muscle of his face, and said something about the odd ways of the people. In an instant more, the ganger, who had been so eager in his apparent recognition was as quiet and composed as before, humbly excusing his excitement as a Polish fashion of welcoming strangers.

Young O'Dwyer and I got on famously together. Whether the lad—he could not have been one-and-twenty—was quite as practised a hand with the instruments as the contractors had represented him to be, was not so certain, but he had wonderful quickness, energy, and an eager desire to please, which had something almost feminine in its vivacity. No trouble tired him, no difficulty daunted him, and I was often obliged to blame his rash recklessness of personal danger among those tenacious quagmires and deep streams

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over which we had to carry our works as best we might. In managing the labourers, my subordinate proved priceless. They would sooner go a league for him than a mile for me, and the very facility with which he conversed with them, speaking Latin at one moment, and some Slavonian dialect at another—his mother, he told me, had been a Hungarian—almost made me envy him.

Podlowitz was central in its situation, but it had few other merits. It was a mere hamlet, composed of eight or ten huts like monstrous beehives, the thatch of whose round roofs was black with soot and green with weeds. There were a few miserable fields, ill-fenced, and full of stunted trees and patches of tall broom plants, where some hungry crops of oats were reared in good seasons. The lean cattle that browsed under the care of two or three half clad children, the swine whose nutriment was picked up in the woods, and the potatoes raised in the patches of garden-ground, had all alike a look of poverty and neglect. Close up to the cultured land came the dark forest—pines, and sand, and heath,

and then heath, pines, and sand, for verst after verst, to north and south.

Our hut was a double one, of good well-seasoned wood, warmed by a couple of iron stoves of Berlin manufacture. In addition to this, there was a house for the Ober Director of the workpeople, a clever Jew, with a considerable aptitude for accounts, but whose influence over the Poles was trifling, and four long sheds where the labourers dwelt. There was not a shop, nor a post-office, within miles. If one wanted so much as a ball of twine or a clasp knife, it was necessary to ride all the way to Radom or Lublin to get it. As for a book in any intelligible language, that was not to be procured at any place nearer than Warsaw or Cracow.

At this time, in spite of all the ~~glorious influence~~ of the scenery and surroundings, we were by no means unhappy. Our hands were too full for time to hang heavy on them; and even when the snow began to fall, sealing up the roads, and checking our progress for a time, we found new resources in the wild country about us.

We had our guns, and made up heavy bags of winter hares and wild-fowl. There were wolf-hunts, in which all the peasants took a part, and these were the most picturesquely barbarous scenes imaginable, what with nets, and spears, yelping dogs, and shouting men, in every variety of semi-Oriental costume, more or less wild and shaggy according to the remoteness of the wearer's district from a great highway.

The long evenings were what I had dreaded the most, when making up my mind to a winter spent among the pine woods of Poland. But O'Dwyer was a capital companion, able and ready to play at chess, cards, or, I believe, anything else, gifted with a store of amusing anecdotes, and no mean performer on flute and horn. Indeed, he was an enthusiast about music, and would play at my request the most difficult and scientific passages of the German masters, always straying at last into some wild, bold burst of simple sad melody—an old Irish tune, as he would tell me when questioned on the subject. He was always good humoured, but I fancy

that he made an effort to keep his spirits when I was present; for it often happened that when I entered the hut unexpectedly, I found Patrick sitting with his head resting on his hand, eyeing the fire with moody thoughtfulness; and once I am certain that I saw him hastily slip into the breast of his coat the miniature of a girl, at which he had been gazing when my step was heard on the threshold.


Much older and more experienced in worldly matters than my assistant could well be, I felt a strong liking for the lad, and would have been glad to win his confidence, in hopes of being able to give advice that might prove useful, but no such opportunity occurred. O'Dwyer was not happy or at ease, that was plain; but there was something about him which made it impossible to force counsel or help upon him. With all his easy gentleness of bearing, the sub-surveyor had a quiet dignity that instinctively repelled whatever might have savoured of intrusion. Thus it came about, that beyond the fact that his mother had been from Hungary, I knew little or nothing about my new friend's antecedents.

He had, I gathered from various hints, been bred up in some foreign university—a fact which perhaps accounted not only for his slight accent in speaking English, but for the scar on his cheek ; some relic, doubtless, of a student's duel among the Burschen of Germany.

The long winter was nearly over, and our body of workmen, reduced as soon as the hard frost and deep snow had put an end to our operations, was being daily recruited. I noticed, however, that most of the men who came, sometimes from a long distance, to join our band of pioneers preferred to attach themselves to the gang directed by Theodore, the tall Oberman. Since that first night of young O'Dwyer's arrival, I had never seen anything peculiar in Theodore's manner. A sensible, trustworthy person, he was the most useful of the native workmen, but he was, as a rule, singularly free from the exuberant vivacity and fiery emotions of his countrymen. He and his men were in constant communication with O'Dwyer, of course, and sometimes it happened that a Pole who was missing

for a couple of days was said to have been despatched as a messenger by the latter. But as the errand was always plausibly accounted for by the truant's return with writing-paper, iron chain, a new spade, or the like, I disturbed myself little on the subject.

About this time, rather a startling incident occurred. One of our labourers, who had been sent to Lublin to buy something or other of which we were in need, came into camp wounded, and with ugly stains of blood on his sheepskin pelisse. Luckily the blood flowed from nothing worse than a smart flesh wound in the arm, and the hurt was soon bandaged, while a notable crone from the village, famous for her cures of sick cattle and bruised human patients, undertook to make "an eight-day job of it." But the man's story was alarming. It seems that he had met, half way towards Lublin, with a party of Russian Light Horse ; that they had shouted to him to stop ; and, on his appearing to hesitate, had galloped towards him, recklessly firing off their pieces, one ball from which had taken effect. But the wounded man, with a sort of instinctive distrust of



Muscovite mercy, had plunged into the thorny thicket, where even Cossacks could not follow, and had made his way, groaning and faint, to the sheds of his own people.


On inquiry, I learned that the Russian troops were scouring the country, arresting travellers, searching for arms among the villages and châteaux, and doing considerable mischief on those estates whose owners were under suspicion. Thus much the peasants knew from the personal testimony of those of their own class ; but there were dark and half-defined rumours of detected conspiracies in the towns, of wide-spread projects for revolt, and of corresponding severities on the part of the government.

All this was very disagreeable news to me. Tranquillity is, as I well knew, the vital atmosphere of commercial success, and our line, the South Polish, depended to no small extent for its funds upon the guaranteed subsidy of the imperial authorities. An outbreak in Poland would injure my employers' interests, and would probably put an immediate stop to my own salary. Yet, as I said to O'Dwyer, I

could not find it in my heart to blame the people, should they resolve at any risk to fling off the dominion of the Muscovites. During the fifteen months I had spent in Poland, I had seen so many petty acts of dull tyranny and cruel persecution directed against those who dared to speak or think contrary to the usages of Holy Russia, that I half despised the Poles for their long submission.

"You see," remarked I to O'Dwyer, as we went down together to examine a bridge, the wooden piers of which had been overturned by the sudden freshet of thawed snow—"you see, these folks have not the sturdy independence of John Bull. How they stand the sway of the grey-coated bullies for one day puzzles me. A clever race, too, with brave hearts and quick wits, if they had but common sense—yet they let the Czar treat them like cattle in a pen, and their spirit seems broken. Ah, if they were but English!"

"Yes, as you say, if they were but English!" exclaimed O'Dwyer, so passionately that his voice actually quivered with emotion; "if they were English, there would be no slaves among





them to look with jealous dislike upon the noble ; all, then, would be free-born men alike, ready to win or die for their country, and—Who fired ?”

For a gun was suddenly discharged from the thicket hard by, and the sharp report sent the dead leaves swirling down from a dusky-red beech beside me. The first idea which suggested itself was, that some prowling Cossack had fired at us, moved by the desire of plunder ; but we soon saw a stout-made man in a black coat, and wearing tinted spectacles, come pushing his way through the brambles, and eagerly pick up a dying bird which his shot had brought down.


“ *Passer rubicellus* ! the red-throat sparrow,” he exclaimed, with exultation ; “ a male bird, and a noble specimen.”

I nudged O'Dwyer's elbow, and whispered that the stranger was, no doubt, a naturalist.

M. Prevoust, the owner of the gun and slayer of the unfortunate red-throated sparrow, soon became on very friendly terms with us. He was, indeed, an agreeable, well-informed person, a Frenchman, and one of the most

active enthusiasts for science that I have ever met with. He had, I gathered from his discourse, been head clerk of some firm in the wine trade at Bordeaux ; but, on coming into possession of some small inheritance, had abandoned the desk to devote all his time to his cherished pursuits. With his hammer, his gun, and his blowpipe, he had wandered over Europe, geologising in one district, collecting birds and reptiles in a second, and in a third performing feats of analytical chemistry. He was, indeed, he told me, glad to earn a few score of florins by occasional assays at the mines, or by testing soils in which the presence of certain minerals was suspected, since he had only a *rente viagère* of eighteen hundred francs to live on, and travelling, even on foot, was expensive.

I was pleased with the man, his learning, his gay good humour, and the simple ardour with which he pursued his researches after fossils and rare lizards, over hill and dale, at an age when most of us prefer the chimney-corner. O'Dwyer, I imagined, liked him less than I did, and withdrew rather coldly from



his frank advances towards friendship, well meant, but clumsily made, for the fat Gaul was a blundering, awkward creature, and singularly devoid of tact. It was curious to see his neat little geological cabinet of stained wood, with a label to every pebble or lump of ore, or to watch the quiet dexterity with which he manipulated the birds he was stuffing, and then to listen to the quaint bonhomie of his conversation. No one laughed more heartily at his frequent mistakes or queer speeches than the ex-clerk of Grandbouchon et Fils, Quai de l'Orfèvre.

“What would you?” said the philosopher, pleasantly, looking up from his needles and stuffing cotton. “I was taught to read, write, and cipher. The best years of my life were spent in ruling the books of Grandbouchon. I made shift, in my evenings, to study Audubon and Cuvier. For society I had never the taste. Parbleu! I am no Richelieu, no Lauzun; and it is probably because I am a stupid bête of an honest man that your compatriot gives me the cold shoulder.”

It was true, and I was vexed by it, that

O'Dwyer grew colder and more reserved towards the Frenchman as time wore on, and I feared that some pitiful pride of his own superior birth or breeding must be the cause.

About this time a misfortune occurred, which threatened for a time to stop our works altogether. A débâcle somewhere on the head-waters of the river swept away our half-finished bridges, tore up the rails, and carried away not only piles of sleepers, ballast, bricks, and other materials, but seriously damaged our forge and carpenter's shed, burying the tools deep in sludge and ice. We worked hard to save as much property as possible, and from the effects of wetting and excitement O'Dwyer caught the fever of the country, and was soon prostrate and helpless.

Either the attack was not very severe, or the patient's strength of constitution, aided by the herbs administered by the old Polish crone, fought successfully against the disease, for the poor lad was soon pronounced convalescent. He had plenty of volunteer nurses, for the only difficulty was to keep the hut clear of the Poles, and the simple fellows

would trudge for unheard-of distances through the woods, to bring back some rustic dainty which might tempt, as they said, the "English lord" to eat. If on any sunny bank a few stray violets or snowdrops peeped shyly out, the village children were sure to espy them, and the village girls to bring them to our settlement, tied in bunches with the gayest ribbons they could find in their scanty store, to please the sick man. I watched over him a good deal while the fever was at its worst, and Prevoust would willingly have given his services too, but O'Dwyer, with an invalid's peevishness, could not endure the Frenchman's presence.

One day—I remember it well—the morning had been warm and dry, and O'Dwyer, with the help of my arm, had taken a short walk, to try his strength; I invited the naturalist to share my now solitary meal. Prevoust, I should have said, was lodged in the Ober Director's hut; the worthy Jew having a spare room, and being glad to earn a few florins by entertaining so easily pleased a guest. Prevoust was in excellent spirits. There was a

childish good humour about him, which contrasted singularly with his patient pursuit of science, and his unwearied industry. He talked, as usual, of a thousand things—indeed, he would generally converse with zest on all topics save one—but for politics he had a rooted aversion. On other points, as he said, laughingly, he could trust to his *gros bon sens* not to lead him into quicksands. But politics bewildered and confused him, and the ex-clerk absolutely declined to speak on that tabooed subject.

“What are kings or kaisers to me, Jean Paul Prevoust?” he asked in his cheery way. “Of tare and tret, or double entry, I know something; but I am stupid as a sheep when state affairs are discussed. *Parbleu!* it is enough for me to stuff my birds and keep my minerals in order.”

He then proceeded, in his artless fashion, to make a number of remarks on the petty events that had lately occurred. He had found an old book at the bottom of his trunk, and, perhaps, as books were scarce, it might amuse the sick man. I thanked the good fellow; it

was creditable on his part, I thought, to be so well disposed towards one who had so plainly taken a dislike to himself. Prevoust seemed to know by intuition what was passing in my mind.

"Sapristi!" said he, "people's fancies are their own property, hein? If your young countryman, who is beau garçon, if ever there was one, does not get on well with a dull bourgeois like me, he cannot make me ass enough to take offence thereat. Foi de Prevoust, I think him a fine lad, and if I cannot be his friend, still he is welcome to the book I spoke of. It is a novel, I believe, though how I got it I can't think." Then, striking his forehead, he added, with a vexed air, "Blockhead that I am! I forgot that the book is in German, and, no doubt, as useless to him as to me."

"Is that all?" said I, smiling. "O'Dwyer speaks German fluently. Indeed, he is a remarkable linguist. His mother was a Hungarian, and——"

I stopped short, for the ex-clerk's bushy eyebrows were suddenly arched, and I fancied

—it must have been fancy—that his eyes sparkled tigerishly behind the blue spectacles. For a moment, a certain feeling of distrust crept over me like a sickly chill, but one more glance at the broad honest face of the naturalist made me ashamed of my suspicion.

“Another glass of wine?” said he, gaily. “Trinquons! so? ah! this meneschar grape reminds me of my native Gironde! Shall I ever see it again, I wonder? My faith! if I had but a few thousand livres de rentes—say four—I would make my way back there, marry, and settle. Yes, range myself, as the word is, and die where I was born.”

And he leaned back in his chair, and sipped his wine in sentimental meditation, while every shadow of distrust passed away from my mind.

Two days after this I mentioned casually that I was, on the morrow, to visit Lublin, whither I had to convey a number of documents of various natures, certificates, vouchers, receipts, letters from officials, and so on, all of which had to go to London for inspection. I did not care to entrust the posting of these



important packets to any other hands than my own or O'Dwyer's, and as the latter was still off duty, my intention was to do my own errand. Then it was that Prevoust, in the simplest manner possible, begged me to do him a favour.

It seemed that one of our Polish labourers had lately brought a letter addressed to our French ally, by an old acquaintance of his, the curator of the Museum at Prague, who was staying for a few days at Lublin, awaiting the sale by auction of some deceased nobleman's cabinet of medals. Now, this very curator was in the habit of purchasing, for the Museum, such specimens of Prevoust's collecting as were adapted for its glass cases, and the Frenchman had expended much pains on a little collection of stuffed birds, in their winter plumage, expressly for sale to this patron.

"The rather," said he, with his usual laugh of absolute good humour, "that I am nearly au sec just at present, and these pert little tits and wrens are worth a good many gulden in convention money. There is one golden

crest——But, bah ! I shall bore you if I get on my hobby of rare birds. Will you kindly carry the case—it is not very heavy—to Lublin for me, and bring back the cash ? I would go myself, but the roads are only passable by horsemen, and as for trusting my precious neck on the back of one of these kicking Polish nags, I might as well jump off a steeple at once—eh ? eh ?”

I joined in the laugh. It was an absurd idea, that of the elderly corpulent Frenchman, who had never, probably, backed a horse in his life, making his way through drift and mire on one of our half-broken, long-maned steeds. Polish horses are famed for their fire and skittishness, and I should have been sorry to see our bulky friend trust himself to their tender mercies.

Thus it occurred that when I rode into Lublin, about noon on the following day, I carried Prevoust's little green case of daintily prepared birds before me on the saddle. Excepting this small box I was encumbered by no luggage, for the papers were in the pocket of my overcoat, and I fully intended to ride

back and reach our huts before supper. My horse, I knew, was capable of doing the distance with ease. I went first to the post-office, and having deposited the letters, I put up my horse at the sorry inn that was somewhat magniloquently called the Royal Hotel, and ordered some refreshment for myself. While it was getting ready, I resolved to call on the curator of the Prague Museum, and execute the ex-clerk's commission without delay. The box was carefully addressed to "Herr Fischer, Turken-strasse, Number 18."

The house was a large one, but it had an air of neglect and dingy gloom; grass grew between the stones of its court-yard, the armorial bearings of some noble Polish family, wantonly defaced by some sportive Russian soldier, were faintly visible over the low-browed arch, and the few windows that faced the street were dirty and broken. I hesitated, I knew not why, as I pushed open the heavy gate, which closed after me with a sullen clang. In the porter's lodge was an old woman, crouched beside a smoky peat fire, and peeling some vegetables. She

merely nodded, and pointed with her skinny finger to the house, when I asked for Herr Fischer.

I entered, finding the front door unlatched, and making my way up a dusty staircase, tapped at the door of a room on the first floor.

“Entrez !” called out a deep voice, speaking in guttural French.

I turned the handle, and found myself in a large chamber, meanly furnished, but littered with books and papers, and in the presence of a high-shouldered, grizzly-headed man in a scull-cap and dressing-gown—the curator, doubtless.

“Have I the pleasure to address Herr Fischer?” said I, with a bow.

The German showed his yellow teeth in rather an ugly smile as he replied in the affirmative, and then begged me to be seated, and received from me the valuable case of birds, and also the letter of the ex-clerk of Grandbouchon et Fils. As the curator read the letter, I had leisure to observe him, and I cannot say that his large head, grey as a

badger's and cropped like a convict's, his bull-neck, beetling brows, and saturnine cast of features, impressed me very favourably. Still, it is not necessary that a scientific man should have the graces of Apollo, and I had seen too much sterling excellence under a rough husk to be hasty in my judgments.

The curator read the letter very slowly, and with something like a sneer contorting the muscles of his coarse mouth, but he seemed in no hurry to inspect the stuffed birds. He finished the perusal at last, and rubbed his fat hands together with a chuckle of not over-pleasant mirth. Then he turned his green eyes on my face, and stared at me with much the same expression—half jocular, half ferocious—with which a cat watches a mouse lying crushed beneath its paw. I felt annoyed at so singular a reception.

"If you are at leisure, Herr Fischer," I began, "to examine the specimens which—"

"Hold your tongue!" thundered the man of science. "It will be your duty to give respectful answers to the interrogations which I shall presently put to you, and fortunate

will you be if by obedience and respect you can get your name off my list !”

So saying, he caught up a hand-bell, and rang it furiously. I started up, imagining that the curator had suddenly become insane ; but in the next moment there was a tramp of heavy boots and clanking of steel scabbards, and four or five Russian gendarmes, followed by a greffier, or clerk, in professional black, hurried into the room.

“ Arrest him !” said the curator of the Prague Museum ; and I found myself a prisoner in the grasp of two of the policemen.

“ There is some mistake !” cried I, struggling. “ I came to see Herr Fischer, of Prague, and I have no doubt intruded upon——”

“ Colonel Stronow, of the Imperial Russian service, Prefect of Police for Poland, very much at your service,” said the pretended German. “ But console yourself ; you have done your errand faithfully, and Lieutenant Gregovitch will not fail to thank you for the care you have taken of his invaluable birds.”

"Gregovitch!" I gasped out, with a sickly feeling of dismay.

"Yes, Lieutenant Alexis Gregovitch, better known to you as Prevoust, the wine merchant's clerk," coolly returned the dreaded chief of the police; and then harshly added, "The examination will now begin. Greffier, note his replies. Prisoner, your wisest course will be to tell all you know of the plots and projects of Prince Adam Sapieha."

"I never heard of such a person!" said I, indignantly; "your spy, if Prevoust be really the rascal you represent him, might have informed you——"


"That your assistant-surveyor, Monsieur—Monsieur—ah! M. O'Dwyer, was no other than that audacious young rebel and traitor to the emperor, and that his secret presence in Poland is connected with the conspiracy for a general rising against my imperial master's authority. This young man has a daring and adroitness unusual at his years, and to convict him of treason will prove a service which——Greffier, are you ready?"

I felt stunned, bewildered. In what an

atmosphere of deception had I been living for months, and how keenly I felt my own blindness in not penetrating the disguise of those who had been my constant companions. I now remembered the Obermann's agitation on first catching sight of my newly-arrived assistant—an agitation explicable enough when I recollected that the man had been born on the Sapieha estates, which lay within a few miles of Sandomir. I remembered O'Dwyer's wonderful influence over the workmen, his knowledge of their language, his frequent confabulations with them, and much more. Him I could not blame, for his purpose had been a noble one, and its objects pure and sacred in my English eyes, but as for the treacherous naturalist——

But here a hearty shake from the hard-fisted gendarmes put an end to my reverie, and I found that the Russian prefect was shouting forth angry questions, and foaming with rage at their remaining unanswered.

I never hope to pass such a half-hour again as the one that followed. Colonel Stronow could make nothing of me, for my very soul





within me was stirred into indignant resistance against the vile system and its villanous tools, and I refused to give the slightest information regarding O'Dwyer—or, more accurately, the young Prince Adam Sapieha. I said boldly that I was an Englishman, guilty of no offence, and bade him remember that my country had both the will and the power to avenge any maltreatment of even one so humble as I was. Stronow bullied and blustered, cajoled and promised, by turns. He loaded me with abuse and curses, shook his fist in my face, and swore that I should be subjected to the “stick,” ironed, flung into a dungeon, fed on black bread, sent to Siberia, even shot. I have no doubt that he would willingly have put in force every one of these menaces had he but dared, and sometimes I half fancied his rage would master his reason, and that I should pay dearly for my stubbornness.

The matter ended in my being hustled out of the room and locked up in another apartment, the prefect's last words being a savage assurance that my contumacy should not pro-

tect my "Polish accomplice," who would be brought into Lublin, tied neck and heels, before sundown, and who was known to be too feeble after his recent fever for flight or resistance.

"And he," snarled out Stronow, with the grin of a vicious dog—"he, at least, has no British government to back his insolence. Martial law has been proclaimed, and a garrison court-martial can be summoned at any hour. Half a dozen cartridges have seldom been bestowed to better purpose. Remove the Englishman."

The room into which I was now thrust was a comfortless chamber on the second story, absolutely bare of furniture, and of wretched appearance. The plaster of the ceiling had fallen away through damp, the boards of the floor were loose and imperfect, and the rat-gnawed wainscot was breached and rotten. But the door had a strong lock, and after satisfying themselves that the drop from the window was such as no man could take without certain injury to neck or limbs, my escort left me to my own reflections.

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Sad enough were these. My own plight, to do myself justice, by no means engrossed my thoughts. The scrape in which the scoundrel Gregovitch had involved me was disagreeable, but not dangerous. My release was certain, though, during my detention of a few days or weeks, according to the temper and prudence of the authorities, I should probably have to suffer many insults and petty annoyances. But I could not but feel the utmost concern for the poor lad I had left, weak and suffering, at Podlowitz, and whose danger surpassed mine a thousand-fold. I remembered fifty little kindnesses that O'Dwyer had done me, many and many a glimpse which his conversation or conduct had afforded, of a generous and noble disposition. By the new light of this grim police revelation I could trace much which had puzzled me before, and I knew that the brave boy's natural frankness had chafed at the concealment his position demanded, and that he had been more than once on the point of admitting me into his confidence.

And now, now that he was ill, feeble, be-

trayed, and that a remorseless and stealthy spy was at his elbow, what hope was there for the banished man who had dared to come back and beard the tyrants of his native land? My heart grew sick within me as I remembered that Stronow's threat about the cartridges and the court-martial was no idle boast. Russian tribunals of this sort were not too prone to mercy, confident that their rough and bloody acts would be called zeal and energy by courtiers and bureaucrats.


A sudden clang of hoofs and neighing of horses called me to the window, and in the street below I saw a party of Cossacks, mounted, gathering into a troop before the door, while their trumpeter sounded a call. They were chatting and laughing in their uncouth way, crouched on the backs of their wiry steeds, and shaking their long lances at intervals with a significant gesture. A strong charger, well caparisoned was led up and down by a gendarme, and presently Colonel Stronow, in uniform, but with a grey capote over his green cloth and glittering decorations, came out and mounted. He had been,

no doubt, unwilling to trust the caption of so important a prisoner as young Sapieha to other hands. The trumpet sounded shrilly, and off went the wild riders, taking the direct course towards the gate that faced Podlowitz. I watched till the last spear-head vanished in the distance, and then turned away with a groan.

A few minutes later I returned to the window, and caught sight of a man leading a saddled horse to and fro. The horse was my own, and I knew the man well, a certain Karel, who had been in our employ, and was now stableman at the hotel, a lively fellow, and one who had often done errands for myself and O'Dwyer. No doubt he had heard me say I was going to the Turkenstrasse, and had brought my horse thither, as I did not return to the inn. A new idea, a new hope, dawned in my mind, and I cautiously lifted the window.

"Karel!"

"My lord——" the poor fellow paused, perplexed at seeing my head thrust from a window in that apparently deserted house.



“Karel, I am a prisoner. But never mind that. Others are worse off. The police and Cossacks have just started for Podlowitz to capture Mr. O'Dwyer—Prince Adam Sapieha—ah! I see you know who he is.”

For Karel, a slim, fiery-eyed young Pole, had turned white with anger and fear at the news, and seemed like one at whose feet lightning had fallen.

Meanwhile I tore a leaf out of my pocket-book, pencilled a few words, twisted up the paper, and tossed it out to Karel, who still stood like one in a dream.

“Quick!” I cried; “jump on my horse. He is a swift one, as you know. Take the path through the woods, outstrip the bloodhounds if you can—warn O'Dwyer—warn the men. Prevoust, the Frenchman, is a Muscovite officer, and has betrayed——”

“I go, English lord!” cried the Pole, as he snatched up my scrap of paper, leaped into the saddle, and rode off like one possessed. In an instant horse and man had vanished.

I passed many weary hours in expectation,

and it was not till long past midnight that Colonel Stronow and his soldiers came back, baffled and furious, cursing the evil fortune that had saved the prey from the hunter.

I was set at liberty on the fourth day, but was conducted to the frontier by the police, and forbidden on any pretext to return to Russian soil. My employment was therefore forfeited, but I found work elsewhere, and have never regretted my share in the prince's escape, a suspicion of which had so embittered the authorities against me.

Karel arrived only just in time, and the workmen, headed by the Obermann, and carrying with them their young chief, as yet too weak to sit a horse, made their retreat into morasses too difficult for even Cossack horsemen. As for Prevoust, or Gregovitch, a timely flight saved him, and scarcely saved him, from the just wrath of the Poles whose lives he had betrayed, and who would have torn him to pieces in their anger. Prince Adam Sapieha, after great hardships and perils, lurking in the woods like a hunted animal, and with a price on his head, was

fortunate enough to cross the Austrian frontier, thanks to the devotion of his followers. I afterwards saw him when he was in the Turkish service, and I an engineer on the Smyrna and Aidin line. But he is now, I believe, in Poland, and once more risking his life for the cause to which his best years and best faculties were freely given.



## TOO LATE FOR COPENHAGEN.

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“LAND HO !” sung out the sailor from aloft, bending down from his giddy perch on the yard-arm, and using his hand as a speaking-trumpet. The captain sprang into the rigging and swept the horizon with his glass. I imitated his example, as I was weary of my floating prison.

“Land it is !” said Captain Brown, cheerfully ; “not in that direction, though, Mr. Compton, sir.” You are looking at Fehmern. The main-land lies on the starboard tack. Mind what you’re doing, you, there at the helm. Keep her full can’t ye ?—there’s Holstein. Looms low, don’t it, and yet land’s always attractive to a passenger !”

By-and-by we stood into the pretty fiord at

the extremity of which stands Kiel. The setting sun turned the smooth waters of the bay into rippling gold, and I looked forward with pleasure to the prospect of landing. The Emma was the property of Hallett and Jones, my employers, who did a great business both with Hamburg and the Baltic ports. She was laden with a valuable cargo of hardware, drugs, dye-woods, and sheet lead, to say nothing of several hundred tons of the rails, required for one of the first of the Danish railways. These goods were consigned to a well-known firm, Krantz and Co., of Kiel, wealthy and well-known merchants with whom our house had had extensive transactions. And I, who was in the full confidence of my principals, had been sent as supercargo. Now-a-days supercargoes are seldom needed for even the most valuable freights, save in the China trade. But there were other reasons for my mission. Messrs. Krantz were debited in our books for considerable sums; and, although their commercial fame was spotless, and their wealth undisputed, it was thought desirable that a balance should be struck. There were long and complicated

accounts to go through, and it had appeared advisable to my chiefs that I should inspect the papers and receive the money ; the rather that I could take the opportunity of my presence in Denmark to inquire into the real nature of certain investments at Copenhagen which had been represented to us as excellent. I was to come back in the brig, which was to take in at Copenhagen, a return freight of Baltic wheat. It had been settled that without waiting for the Emma's unloading, I was to hasten to the capital by way of Schleswig and Jutland.

When we dropped anchor in Kiel harbour, the last crimson flush of the sunset had died out of the horizon, with its ever-green oaks, rolling sand-bluffs, flat pastures, and thousand windmills. On the following morning I set off, guided by one of the hangers-on of the hotel where I had spent the night, in search of the residence of the Messrs. Krantz. The guide, a Dutch lad in a green jacket and wooden shoes, was loud in his praise of the wealth and merits of our correspondents. It was old Mynheer Krantz, he declared, who had

first turned the stream of Baltic traffic into Kiel Bay ; it was he who had encouraged the setting up of manufactories in the town ; it was he who had, at his own charges, cleared away a dangerous sand-bar on which many a vessel had struck when the wind was easterly, and the currents too strong to be resisted. Krantz and Co. had thriven wonderfully. They were very rich. The narrator ought to know, for had he not a brother Rupert—his own name was Clauss, at my service—who was messenger in their office ? They were liberal masters. And then their charity to the poor, their hospitality, and their tulips ! Clauss, like a true Hollander, grew eloquent, on the score of the tulips of Messrs. Krantz, father and son, for the Co. appeared to be mythical. And before he had finished, we stood before the merchant's door.

A fine old house, large though low, and built of brickwork covered over with a sort of glossy cement of a pinkish colour, seamed by huge black beams of oak, heavy and stout enough to have been the timbers of a line-of-battle ship. The latticed windows, framed in a


thick growth of creepers, had queer old diamond panes set in lead, queer mullions of carved stone, and little polished reflectors placed outside those of the lowest storey, to convey to the inmates the images of persons passing in the street without, exactly such as I had seen before in Flemish towns. Behind the house was a huge walled garden, flanked by conservatories, and one wing of the mansion was devoted to the counting-house; through the window of which I could see the grey head of an elderly cashier bending over a heap of papers and glittering coin. The brass-plate, on which were inscribed the words "Krantz and C<sup>ie</sup>," was as bright as Mambrino's helmet, and from the stork's nest on the roof to the moss-grown pavement, everything looked venerable, quiet and serene.

M. Krantz himself was from home, but I was cordially received by his son and junior partner, Paul Krantz, one of the finest young fellows I had ever seen; tall and fair-faced, with bright honest blue eyes and yellow hair. He was some years younger than myself, being about five or six-and-twenty, but was

married. He and his young wife and children resided with his father, who was a widower, and had no son but Paul.

"We have been duly advised of your purpose in visiting Kiel, Mr. Compton," said the young merchant, as he shook hands with me; and though my father was unfortunately unable to remain at home to receive you, we can, if you please, complete the necessary arrangements without waiting his return. Captain Brown has already looked in upon us with the Emma's bills of lading and the invoices, and I am quite prepared to go through the accounts and hand over the money to your safe keeping."

We—M. Paul and I—had a rather severe morning's work over the voluminous accounts, with all the mass of vouchers, letters, bills, couched in every language written throughout Northern Europe; but at last we came to a satisfactory conclusion. A considerable sum was due to Hallett and Jones, and this sum tallied, within a few marks banco, with the amount of my chiefs' estimate. The cashier was summoned.



"Now, monsieur, we can give you your choice," said the young Dane, smiling good-humouredly, "how will you take the balance. Gold, or bills on London I cannot at this moment offer you; but silver, or Hamburg notes, or Russian paper roubles, or notes of the Royal Bank of Denmark, or Dutch coupons: to all and any of these you are heartily welcome. Shall we pay in silver rix-dollars? I only warn you that the weight will prove rather cumbrous."

"Why yes," said I, hesitating, as I remembered that a sack of no small size and a porter would then become necessary to the conveyance of the sum of which I was to be the temporary custodian, and hastily computed the various cares and annoyances inseparable from such unwieldy treasures; "yes, I think I will take the balance in Danish bank paper."

And, in Danish bank paper, the money was duly paid over to me in exchange for my receipt. The notes were securely lodged in my big black leather pocket-book, steel-chained and patent locked, and always heed-

fully kept in an inner breast-pocket of my coat. My reason for selecting Danish notes in preference to Hamburg notes was, that as I was bound for Copenhagen, where I had to inquire, as I have previously said, respecting the eligible character of certain investments, I was sure of being able to exchange the notes for good bills on London, or government securities, without losing by the transfer; which would not have been the case had I chosen the German currency. Business over, M. Paul Krantz expressed much hospitable regret that I would absolutely insist on leaving Kiel that very day. He had hoped, he said, that I should have been able to stay as a guest under the family roof for a day or two at least, that he might have the pleasure of showing me such humble lions as Holstein could boast of, and that I should have stayed long enough to have made acquaintance with his father, my correspondent, who, his son was good enough to say, had heard much praise of me, when he met my chiefs in London a year ago.

However, I could not linger; for the jour-

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ney by land through the southern part of the Danish peninsula would, I knew, be slow, and I was desirous to have time, not only to make the needful inquiries regarding the much-lauded investment, but also to explore the museums and other stock sights of Copenhagen before the Emma should have completed her unloading and be ready for her return freight. I had arranged for the hire of a light carriage, and had bespoken post-horses, and must really go northward that afternoon.

"You will lunch with us, at any rate. I will give Margaret a hint to advance the dinner hour," said the young representative of the great firm of Krantz, who spoke French and English with equal fluency. Then, suddenly he frowned and started, exclaiming, "Hundsfoot! What does the fellow want, staring in after that fashion? Arnhold, Rupert, ask his business, some of you!"

I turned hastily. All I could see was the fast-vanishing figure of a tall man, wearing one of those loose rough coats that sailors call "gregoes," and a red Slavonian cap, such as

Baltic mariners affect. Not a glimpse of his face could I catch ; but there was something suspicious in the hurry with which he was shuffling off. Paul assured me that he saw the ruffian greedily eyeing the heaps of notes and silver which the old cashier, Herr Niklas Frost, had spread upon the desk beside me. However, Arnold and Rupert, the two messengers, came back merely to report that the stranger had made off at a brisk pace in the direction of the wharfs, and that they thought him a Russian seaman, by his gait and attire. M. Paul broke into a cheery laugh, saying:—

“I am afraid Mr. Compton will report us Danes as singularly timorous folks, startled at shadows, but the face I saw was no pleasant one, and the way the rogue gloated over the money on that desk was not encouraging to a merchant. But come, let me offer you some refreshment, and introduce you to Madame Krantz.”

I was introduced to Madame Krantz, a very pretty young woman, with the dazzling complexion and pale gold hair for which many of the North Jutlanders are celebrated, and

also to the two charming little children, Christian and Ellice (which latter name corresponds to our English Alice), and I was shown everything worth seeing in the house and gardens. Such wealth of tulips, assorted like the patterns of some rich mosaic pavement and blooming gloriously; such a rose garden; such wall-fruit, and stocks, and dahlias, and quaint old-world blossoms, I had never before beheld. And the pictures—choice old battle-pieces, pretty bits of pastoral scenery, the work of Dutch masters, or of the best artists of that Danish school that learned to use the brush from Dutch example—were good and valuable, and harmonized with the oak panels and carved cornices, as perfectly as did the massive furniture of heavy wood and crimson velvet.

M. Paul and his pretty wife and I parted with civil regrets that our acquaintance should terminate thus early. They came out to the door to see me start, under the guidance of the red-jacketed postilion who had control over the calèche and the two heavy Holstein steeds. Travellers were at that time

greater rarities in Kiel than they have become since the war began, and quite a knot of people had assembled at the corner of the street to see the Englishman drive off. Among those idlers, I recognised the tall figure in the grego and red cap.

Off I went, clattering and rattling up the dusty road. The speed was not great, and neither coaxing nor scolding could induce my gaily-attired driver to accelerate his pace beyond the comfortable jog-trot of Holstein journeyings. His good humour was incapable of being ruffled ; for, however impatiently I might address him in my scanty stock of German, he did but turn his broad placid face towards me with a pleasant smile and a polite "Ja, ja, Meinherr;" but the stout bay steeds were never much interfered with. Holstein men and Holstein horses are proverbially strong, slow, and amiable.

The sun went down long before we had traversed the sixteen English miles of dusty road, lying between Kiel and Eckernfiord, but there was a bright full moon that made travelling safe and easy, as well as cooler and

more enjoyable than the journey by day, so I pushed on as fast as post-horses could take me, and reached the city of Schleswig soon after midnight. I allowed myself only a few hours of sleep at the quaint little hotel; starting northwards on the following morning, and so early that the dew clung in pearly clusters to every blade of grass in the great meadows to which the thousands of comely cattle were being slowly driven; the larks were just beginning to rise and warble out their morning hymn as the yellow sun shone level across the meres and meadows. I found that I really did make more rapid progress as I advanced towards the north, the horses being fleetier and less sluggish; the postilions less apathetic. My hope was to reach the Nyeborg ferry in time for the last steamer across to Seeland, and to sleep at Ringstad, take the railway on the following day, and arrive at Copenhagen before noon. To my vexation, however, while still there were long miles of road between me and the ferry, the clouds began to thicken and grow dark to seaward, while the sultry air was fanned by short puffs of wind that

shook down the yellowing leaves from the hedgerows. Sure token of a coming storm.

At one small station, in Fünen, midway between Flensburg and Odensee—where I had found the postmaster asleep and his servants absent at some village feast, and had consequently had to aid myself in harnessing the fresh horses—before the traces were quite adjusted, a cloud of dust came rolling like smoke along the road, and up dashed a “forbudd,” or avant-courier, very hot and breathless, with his horse in a lather of foam, vociferating for horses.

“My master’s in a wonderful hurry, wonderschön!” said the man, swinging himself down from his reeking saddle, and stamping his heavy boots on the ground to get rid of the dust, “but he pays well, and wants to be well served.”

And, indeed, the animal he had ridden looked, with drooping head and spur-marked flanks, none the better for the furious rate at which she had sped along. The postmaster looked at her rather ruefully. “If I mount a forbudd for the traveller I shan’t allow him


to go tearing along, wild-hunstman fashion, as thou hast, Niel Hansen. Is he some foreign ambassador, my lad, or going on the king's service, that he ruins horseflesh in this way, all that he may get some hours earlier to Copenhagen?"

The postilion replied that he knew nothing of him. The stranger was a foreigner, but he spoke the best of Danish and German, and tossed his dollars about as children toss beach pebbles, all the time rating and expostulating with those whom he found too slow in driving or putting horses to his carriage. He was some great baron, no doubt. Perhaps a Russian or a Swede. At any rate, he was eager to hasten on, and the postmaster had better get the cattle ready forthwith. By this time my own calèche was ready, and, in the stir and exhilaration of rapid motion, I soon forgot the impatient traveller who was a few leagues behind. The roads were in unusually good order, and the latter part of my journey was speedily performed; but as I came in sight of the dark blue sea line and the white houses and low church tower of Nyeborg, the cop-

per-coloured masses of cloud rolled sullenly up, and the peculiar gloom that precedes a summer storm fell like a veil over land and sea. Then came a flash of lightning, and as if it had been a signal for elemental war, hail and rain came dashing fiercely in our faces, making the horses swerve and rear; the thunder rolled in emulation of the roaring of the wind that suddenly sprang up. It was in a drenched and draggled condition, half blinded by the lightning, and soaked with wet, that we reached Nyeborg.

“The steamer for Korsøe?” was my first inquiry.

The landlord of the clean little inn removed his blue and white china pipe from his mouth, and pointed with the stem of it towards the ferry. I could see that the water was everywhere flecked with foam, and that no glimpse of the opposite shore could be distinguished through the driving rain. There was no steamer visible in the little haven, except one black and silent craft, lying snugly under the shelter of some piles, with deserted deck and smokeless chimney.






“You won’t sleep in the island to-night, Herr Englander. The last boat had a tough job to struggle across. The wind’s getting round to the north, too. Not a skipper in Denmark, in his senses, would try to make the run over to Korsøe this evening, not even if his heart were as stout as old Tordenskiold’s.”

The landlord’s assertions were fully confirmed by the sailors and custom-house officers whom I found crowding together under some sheds near the wharf, and wistfully peering through the rain and gathering darkness at the tempestuous sea. It was a mere summer squall, they said, but they were afraid that mischief would be done among the fishers and small coasting craft. However, the storm would doubtless have spent its fury before morning, and the ferry would then be easily traversed, so the delay was not very serious, after all. An hour or so earlier I should have been in time to be a passenger on board the last boat that had ventured out, and, at the cost of some risk and a wetting, should have slept in Ringstad. As it was, I was too late.

The accommodation which the kro of Nye-

borg offered me was of the character most common in Denmark. Everything was exquisitely clean, homely, and snug. By a slight stretch of imagination, I could have fancied myself a guest at one of those old English hostelries that Izaak Walton selected as the rendezvous of his Piscator and Venator, that quaint type of rustic trimness with its lavender-scented sheets, sanded floors, honeysuckle-draped porch, and rude plenty. The supper that was set before me was a good one, and so was the Rhenish wine. I had not quite finished either, before I heard a rapid roll of wheels and a mighty cracking of whips. I could distinguish by the sound that a carriage drawn by four horses had dashed up to the door of the kro. Then there was a hum and clatter of voices and feet, and a tap at the door of my room. In came the handmaiden, who combined the duties of waiter and chambermaid, and who was as spruce in her velvet bodice and scarlet kirtle, her heavy gold earrings and silver hair-skewers, as if she had no work to do. Her round blue eyes were very wide open with astonishment.




“Herr Englander,” she said, in her Jutland dialect, so like Yorkshire English in its breadth and sound, “a great knight or count has just arrived, extra-post, and—”

“—And if Mr. Compton will pardon his intrusion, he is here to answer for himself,” said another, and a stronger voice, speaking in very excellent English. A tall elderly gentleman appeared on the threshold, bowing politely to me, hat in hand, and wearing a long blue cloak, on which the rain-drops glistened. The newly-arrived traveller, no doubt. But what he could want with me? unless I should prove to be the occupier of the only available parlour of the kro, and he wished for permission to share it, I could not guess. Probably the stranger saw my perplexity; for he said, stepping forward, “My name is Krantz—Jorn Krantz; and when I tell you that I have travelled post-haste from Kiel, on purpose to seek a few moments discourse with Mr. Compton of the house of Hallett and Jones, you will not, I hope, refuse to listen to me.”

I made a polite reply, and begged that Mr. Krantz would be seated. He gladly removed

his heavy cloak, and stood before me in his tightly buttoned black coat, with a neat white cravat, a small diamond brooch stuck in the breast of his frilled shirt, and the party-coloured riband of some foreign decoration in one button-hole—together, from his grey head and calm intelligent face down to his well-polished boots, the type of an old-fashioned merchant of the highest commercial stamp. He was rather proud and stiff of bearing, though very urbane, and his voice was that of a person used to speak with authority. Disregarding my invitation to sit down and share the appetising meal that smoked upon the table, his first act was, as soon as the waiting-maid had left us to ourselves, to rise, and lock the door. Then he turned to me; and as his face came for the first time under the full light of the lamp, I could see that his features were quivering with emotion. Twice he tried to speak, and twice the words seemed to choke him; but he turned his head away, and covered his eyes with his hand, before he said, in a voice that was weak and tremulous.



“ You see in me, Mr. Compton, the unhappy, almost heart-broken father of Paul Krantz. Oh, my son ! my son ! Fond and proud of him as I have been, what shame is this that he has brought upon my white hairs ? Bear with me a moment, Sir—only a moment.”

And the old merchant—in whom I could not doubt that I beheld the head of the great house of Krantz and Co.—sank into a chair, covered his face with his wrinkled trembling hands, and sobbed aloud. But this emotion was soon conquered ; and then, in a broken voice and with averted face, the poor old gentleman told me what here follows :

The Krantz family had been in commerce for several generations, known for a probity and honour that were traditional among them. The first black sheep of the flock was the old merchant's only son, Paul Krantz. I started when I heard this, half incredulous of such an accusation against the fine, frank-looking young Dane whom I had so lately seen, and who had impressed me very favourably ; but then the accuser was his own father ! I was shocked to hear that Paul was a hypocrite, a gambler ;

so wedded to high play, both on the Bourse and at the lansquenet-table, that he now threatened to engulf his father's whole fortune.

"All I have is his," said the old merchant, sadly; "and if he has fallen so low as to rob his father that he may be in funds for a fresh trip to the Hamburg Exchange and the card-tables, I can bear it in silence. After all, in a few years it would, in the course of nature, have passed to him. But my good name is in danger now, and *that* I would keep free from stain at any cost. Mr. Compton, the notes in which my son paid over to you the large amount due to Hallett and Jones—those notes—" He stopped, gasping.

"What of them?" exclaimed I, getting excited in my turn, and mechanically thrusting my hand into the inner pocket, where the steel-bound pocket-book lay securely.

"Those notes are forgeries!" answered the merchant, hoarsely.

And then the rest of the sad story came out. Paul Krantz had wilfully misled his father as to the probable date of my arrival to settle our account with the Kiel firm. He

had had considerable losses of late in some wild stock-jobbing speculations on the Paris Bourse, and his agents had threatened him with exposure if the deficit were not made good. Desperate, and confiding in his father's indulgence to bear him scathless in case of discovery, the unhappy young man had contrived that his parent should be absent from home at the time of my arrival, and had paid me in fictitious notes, a large quantity of which, availing himself of his master-key, he had previously lodged in the cash-box. These notes were in a manner forced upon me, as a conjuror forces a card, for even had I chosen to incumber myself with the silver, there were not nearly enough dollars in the counting-house to liquidate the claim of my employers.

"I returned, and suspecting that something was amiss, interrogated my son, and examined the books and the cash," said the merchant. "Paul prevaricated at first, but presently made a full confession, imploring mercy, not only on account of the ties of blood between us, but for the sake of his

innocent wife—she, sir, knows nothing of his errors, and his disgrace and his punishment would kill her outright. And therefore, without losing a moment, I started on your traces, using every exertion to overtake you, which, however, but for the most lucky incident of your being detained here, I should hardly have done on this side of Copenhagen. And once there, you would, doubtless, have presented the notes, when discovery—scandal——”

And here he broke off, groaning, but soon found voice again to tell me the object of his haste. He entreated, drawing a thick rouleau of bank-notes from his bosom, to be permitted to redeem, with genuine paper of the Royal Danish Bank, those forged securities that I had so unsuspectingly accepted from his guilty son. The loss, as he justly remarked, ought, in no case, to fall on Hallett and Jones, and he would willingly make any sacrifice to prevent a stigma from falling on the spotless reputation of Krantz and Co. Paul was frightened, if not penitent, and his father was resolved to send him to America, trusting




that change of scene and habits might wean him from evil. If I would kindly pledge myself to breathe no word of the transaction until I should see my employers, disgrace might yet be avoided.

I consented. My duty to Hallett and Jones was clear, and, besides, it would have been very damaging to my future prospects to have earned the imputation of having neglected the interests of employers so kind and liberal as my chiefs. The grief of that noble old man would have melted a harder heart than mine, and I readily made him the required promise. The notes were duly counted out and the exchange effected, and it was with a sigh of relief that I secured the true bank-paper under lock and key in my stout black leather pocket-book. As I did so, M. Krantz held out his hand and shook mine heartily, and announced his intention of returning home at once, without repose, to complete his arrangements for the reformation of his misguided boy. He at once rang the bell and ordered his horses to be got ready. In half an hour

we parted company, with thanks and blessings on the old merchant's part.

"Old ·Jorn Krantz is your friend for life, remember," he said, as he threw his cloak over his shoulders and stepped into the carriage; "but how very fortunate it was that I overtook you as I did!"

I thought so too. Very likely the ultimate loss of the money might have been prevented; but delay, scandal, and annoyance, with probable litigation, were evils almost as bad; and I secretly congratulated myself on the lucky chance of my detention at the Nyeborg ferry. Next morning I crossed without difficulty, and before night-fall was at Copenhagen. Naturally, my thoughts dwelt much on my painful interview with the aged merchant, whose conduct appeared to me admirable. There, was, however, one thing about M. Krantz that puzzled me. It seemed to me as if I had seen him before. Not his face. That was wholly unknown to me, but his figure: that tall, erect, and yet supple form, with rather a peculiar carriage of the head. It seemed strangely familiar to me,



especially when the merchant had flung his cloak round him before stepping into his carriage. I perplexed myself on this score for some time.


On the day following I called at a bank which the old merchant had recommended, and found, as I had expected, the names of Krantz and Co. a sufficient introduction. My Danish notes were duly exchanged for good bills on London, and for crisp promises to pay on the part of the Old Lady of Threadneedle-street. I found the bankers remarkably courteous and communicative, and we parted very good friends, and I strolled up and down the streets for a while, gazing at the shop windows, full of curious ornaments and quaint objects from Iceland, Sweden, and Russia; at the fisherfolk, gorgeous in blue and red and white, and resplendent in gilt frontlets and jewelled earrings; at the rosy lasses from the Scandinavian mainland, in their scarlet bodices and high caps, staring with round-eyed curiosity on the splendours of what seemed to them a wonderful city, and chattering volubly to each other in Norse or Swedish

as they trotted past with their milk-pails. But I was not long allowed to play the part of a passive spectator.

I was in a glove-shop, buying a pair of number eights of the so-called Swedish kid, under the patronage of a smiling gloveress, whose knowledge of English did not extend beyond the words, "yes, very well," when I heard a sound of running, and a clamour of voices, and I looked out into the street. My appearance was greeted with a shout of "The Englander himself!"

One of the clerks from the bank I had so lately left, breathless, flushed, and without his hat, rushed in and caught me by the collar. At his heels were several other men, porters and messengers of the bank, most likely, but they were accompanied by two policemen in uniform, who followed the clerk's example in grasping me roughly, gruffly uttering the words, "In the name of the king and the law."


"Are you all mad? Let me go, you block-heads, or you will repent this," cried I, angry though amazed. I shook them off for a mo-




ment, but only to be clutched by so many strong hands that resistance was impossible, and I was dragged, with torn coat and disordered cravat, in ignominious procession down the street, the object of hooting from the crowd that rapidly assembled. The abusive epithet most frequently repeated was "Schwindler," and this was intelligible enough, though why it should be applied to my unlucky self was a mystery. The mystery was soon cleared up. I was dragged into the bank, and confronted with the bankers. The good-humoured partners looked wrathful enough now. On the counter lay a heap of notes, and I was sternly asked whether I denied having paid in these notes less than an hour before? I took a glance at the numbers. The fact was undeniable. I admitted it.

"You hear him? He confesses. He owns to being the man who passed off these forged notes," cried the banker, looking round on the assembly; "after *that*, he may be taken before the Correctional Tribunal at once.

"Forged notes! You do not surely mean



——" I began, but I grew quite faint and sick, and I could not continue. They took my silence for a proof of guilt, and no wonder! I was taken before a commissary, or some such personage, then before a judge of instruction, and was fully committed for trial. That the notes I had paid in were forgeries, there was no doubt. All experts, including a clerk from the government bank, were unanimous on that head. In vain, rallying my bewildered faculties, I begged for a private interview with the judge, unwilling to tell the open court how and why I had received the notes, and to suggest the only conjecture that appeared possible to me: namely, that by some strange mistake the fictitious bank-paper had, for the second time, been put up in my pocket-book. Refused this, I could merely declare that I had received the notes from the hand of M. Jorn Krantz, head of the respected firm of Krantz and Co., and being asked where, was obliged to own that it was at Nyeborg ferry, whither he had followed me on "urgent private affairs."



This lame explanation was treated with very natural contempt. I was bullied, brow-beaten, and urged to confess that I was an accomplice of a certain notorious gang of foreign escrocs, then infesting Denmark, whose audacity was well known. Unfortunately, I could furnish no proofs of my respectability, for my papers were all on board the Emma, even the vouchers, &c., having been left with Paul Krantz, in a sealed envelope, to be given to Captain Brown at his next visit. The telegraph was not yet in existence between Copenhagen and Kiel. I had no help for it but to go to prison, and to prison I went. Bitter and melancholy enough my reflections were during the five ensuing days. Danish prisons, like all else in Denmark, are clean and neat, and I was not harshly treated, but I met with no sympathy. The magistrates who examined me, the jailers, the chaplain, the very English sub whom I teased by repeated letters to the British Consulate and Legation into paying me a reluctant visit, all believed me a scoundrel of the deepest dye, and took my unvarnished


tale for a clumsy invention. I wrote urgently both to the Krantz family and to Captain Brown, but had received no reply when the day for my trial arrived.

"You will be put to the bar along with your captain, it seems," said the turnkey, as he summoned me to come forth, as the judges were awaiting me.

"My captain?"

"I mean," said the turnkey, contemptuously sneering at my apparent hypocrisy, "I mean your head rascal—Klopstok, the swindler—just caught."

In a few moments I passed into the crowded court, and was thrust into a sort of coop, or dock, in which stood a tall man, a prisoner like myself. I could not repress a cry of astonishment. This man, Klopstok, was no other than the aged merchant, old M. Krantz, who had held so important a conference with me at the Nyeborg ferry. True, the grey hair that had given him a false look of venerable age was gone, and in its stead appeared a short grizzled shock of coarse black, while the gold-rimmed glasses





no longer shaded the cunning dark eyes that leered at judge and jury, witness, and fellow-prisoner, with the consummate effrontery of one who knew that he had nothing for it but to put a bold face on the matter. He greeted me with a nod and a grin.

Before I recovered from my surprise, to my great joy I saw friendly faces and heard kind voices, and M. Paul Krantz, accompanied by Captain Brown, and by a benevolent-looking white-haired old gentleman, whom he introduced as his father, the true Jorn Krantz, as half Copenhagen could testify, came bustling into court to speak to my respectability, and to explain the mistake.

I was liberated, and the good Danes seemed to be sorry for the rough treatment I had experienced, as if it had been really incumbent on them to recognise my honesty when appearances were so terribly against me. To do Klopstok—alias Bernard, alias Orlemann—justice, he did not attempt to deny the trick he had played me; certain as he now was, that he could not escape punishment on the ground of his almost innumerable

frauds. This man, a Russian by birth, was the chief of that gang of swindlers, of whose daring Paul Krantz had spoken to me at Kiel. He it was, who, on the arrival of the Emma, had contrived to worm out, by means of interrogating one of the mates whom he met at a wharf-side tavern, my business in Denmark. He, too, in the disguise of a Baltic mariner, had dogged me to the Krantz mansion, and had seen, through the window, in what currency I was paid the large sum due to Hallett and Jones, of which he resolved to possess himself. My quick departure somewhat disconcerted him, but his ready wit had devised a plan for turning even that to profit, and he had followed me post haste, to personate the part of an afflicted father, and to delude me into exchanging good notes for forged ones : a scheme in which he had but too well succeeded.

By great good fortune, the swindler had been captured with my money still on his person, and as both I and Paul Krantz—who, I need hardly say, had been basely maligned, and was neither gambler nor knave,

but one of the best of good fellows—had a list of the numbers, the judges ordered the property of Hallett and Jones to be restored to me; and the bankers, who were profuse in their apologies, were also saved from loss. Before I left Copenhagen, Herr Klopstok was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. I think, however, he must have escaped, for, during a recent trip to the French dockyards and arsenals, I could take my oath I saw him in a suit of party-coloured serge, in irons, on the deck of a French frigate, bound for Cayenne.

## THROUGH THE BLOCKADE.

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“PHILLIPS, something must have happened to the governor. I’ve been watching the clock ever since eleven. It is almost half-past. He has never been five minutes after time in all the twenty-seven years that I have been a clerk here.”

So said the elderly cashier, and I could not but admit that the occurrence was unprecedented, though my own experience in the firm was short in comparison with that of the first speaker. Mr. Trent, second partner in the old-established banking-house of Follet, Trent, and Co., was punctuality itself. He chiefly managed the business, since we saw little of our nominal principal, the first partner, whose working days were past. And during the

five years for which I had been in the employ of the firm, I had never known Mr. Trent to be absent from his post. Any deviation from routine on the part of a methodical man of business is apt to startle his subordinates, and it is not surprising that while Mr. Griffith and myself were shaking our heads over the non-appearance of our chief, the juniors should be venturing on rash conjectures, ranging from apoplexy to insolvency. But these guesses were abruptly checked by the sudden arrival of Mr. Trent himself. He came in with a hasty step, and I thought, as he passed by with a nod and a civil word of greeting to the bank parlour, that he looked ill and harassed. Almost immediately he sent for me.

"Mr. Phillips," said the banker, speaking in a nervous fidgety manner, quite unlike his usual calm decision of speech and bearing, "I have something to ask of you—a service—a favour, in short, for I am sensible that this is not at all in the way of regular business duty—in a word, would you go to America to oblige me?"


"Certainly, sir," I replied, at once. "I

have been there before, if you remember, to attend the winding up of that Wall-street firm, three years since. If it is your desire that——”

But here I was interrupted.

“I want much more than that, Frank Phillips,” broke in my employer, speaking with unwonted excitement, “more than I have a right to ask of you, and more than I would ask of any of your companions, except, perhaps, Griffith, who is too old, and we have been good friends out of business hours, you and I, and—and I knew your father, Frank, and knew you before you left Charterhouse, so I think I may rely on you in this sad business.”


And then Mr. Trent proceeded to explain. The service he required at my hands was strictly of a private character, and wholly unconnected with money matters. The banker, as I was vaguely aware, had an orphan niece to whom he was greatly attached, and who had for some years been married. This lady resided abroad, somewhere in Italy, to the best of my knowledge, and her husband was



an American gentleman from one of the Southern states, and the owner of sufficient property to enable him to live in Europe with his English wife. But I was now to hear, for the first time, that on the outbreak of hostilities Mr. Bolton had found it impossible to withstand the call of patriotism, that he had hastened across the Atlantic to take service in the Confederate army, and that he had quieted his young wife's apprehensions by the promise of a speedy return. Many Southerners did the same, obeying the summons to arms with a certainty that the whole dispute would be settled in one short campaign. Among the disappointed was Captain Bolton. Long months went by, and still the war went on, nor did any safe and convenient opportunity for his wife to rejoin him present itself. Blockaded by sea, and guarded by land, the passage of the Confederate frontier was full of risks, especially for women and children. Natural anxiety and hope deferred had affected Mrs. Bolton's health and spirits. She had come back from Italy to England, to be nearer, as she said, to her husband when he

should summon her to share his fortunes. And at last the summons had come, but it was no joyful one.

Captain Bolton had been severely wounded in a skirmish with some of General Gilmore's troops, then besieging Charleston, and he had expressed a strong desire to see his wife and babes for what might but too probably be the last time. And the favour which Mr. Trent had to ask of me was, that I should undertake the task of escorting his niece and her children on the hazardous voyage to South Carolina. The hazards of which I have spoken of course belonged entirely to the last portion of the route, for the outward run from England to the British possession of New Providence was safe and easy. But between the Bahama Islands and the Carolina coast lay the blockading squadron, and I knew that no trifling dangers and hardships must be risked by those whom love of gain or any higher motive should urge to elude the vigilance of the Federals. Be that as it might, I undertook the commission, and the next packet carried Mrs. Bolton and her two





children, under my care, to Nassau, where the real difficulties of the pilgrimage began.

To procure a passage to Charleston, Wilmington, or some other and less known port of the beleaguered Confederacy, was, indeed, easy enough. The bay was full of vessels attracted to that once lonely roadstead by the gainful contraband commerce then at its height. There, at anchor, side by side, lay the bluff-bowed brig that had brought out a cargo of war material from England, and the swift rakish schooner destined to carry on the transhipped freight to a Southern harbour. All the fishing-boats, dories, and canoes, seemed to have been enlisted in the service of plying between the deep-laden vessels and the shore, and the quays were all too small to accommodate the towering piles of clothing and medicine, saddles, sabres, cavalry boots, kegs of gunpowder, and Birmingham rifles, that lay heaped upon wharf and jetty. Streets, landing-place, beach and bay, were all alive with the hustle and stir of a gainful and perilous traffic. Under such circumstances as these, to obtain a passage to the American

mainland might have appeared the simplest proceeding conceivable.

Such, however, was far from being the case. I found, by listening to the flying reports that circulated about the town, and which invariably referred to the one absorbing topic of interest, that the blockade was more serious than we in England had believed it to be. Many of the sly low black-hulled steamers, many of the tall-masted schooners and brigantines, that lay awaiting an opportunity to slip off unnoticed, were destined to capture. This was a mere matter of profit and loss, as an old merchant, whose English was made peculiar by the drawling Bermudian accent, explained to me on the second day of our stay at Nassau.

"You see, sir, one cargo in three pays, and one cargo in four saves us from being out of pocket—yes, mister. We count on some loss, we do, but if a clipper has the luck to get twice in with notions, and twice out with cotton, why the Yankees are welcome to her afterwards, hull, spars, and running gear."

"And the crew?" I inquired.


But my communicative friend treated this part of the business lightly enough. The seamen had high pay, and took their share of the risk of being shot, drowned, or blown up, in consideration of extra wages. The captain and mates were allowed stowage for so many cubic feet of European goods one way, and so many cotton bales the other, and often had a per-centage on the amount realised by a fortunate venture. Success, therefore, meant wealth for the owners and officers, and at least a pocketful of dollars for the foremast-men, and in case of capture there was no danger of anything worse than a tedious and comfortless detention for some months in Fortress Monroe or elsewhere. When, however, I spoke of the probable results of an unsuccessful attempt to the passengers, supposing the latter to be persons connected with the South by descent or adoption, the talkative Bermudian grew serious.

“That, as he observed, “was no laughing matter. Uncle Sam was plaguy vexed with rebels or rebels’ friends, and to get out of his

clutches, when once made prisoner, was not easy."

And, indeed, I found that the boarding-hotels of the island were crammed with the families of Southerners, longing for a secure opportunity of rejoining the husbands and fathers who, far away in Virginia, Tennessee, or Carolina, were fighting or toiling in the cause of their new-born republic, but afraid to make the perilous plunge. If many vessels came back triumphant, many were taken or destroyed, and most of those that came victoriously in with a welcome freight of costly cotton could show the shot-holes in their sails, and the marks where Federal cannon-balls had "hulled" them during the fruitless chase.

Mrs. Bolton, my charge, was a timid, delicate little woman, quite unfit to lighten my burden of responsibility by taking any portion of it on herself. She loved her husband dearly, and to reach the couch where he lay wounded, and perhaps dying, she was willing to endure hardships and confront dangers that at another time would have seemed




insurmountable to her. But as for any aid or advice in such a matter as running the blockade, I might as well have applied for counsel to her two baby girls, little Lucy and Fanny, as to their mother, my employer's niece. Thrown thus wholly upon my own resources, I spent much time in the preliminary inquiries, and at last comforted myself that I had come to a sensible and practical decision.

The vessel in which I took our passages was a swift-sailing English schooner, the *Saucy Jane*, of and from Liverpool. A beautiful craft she was, with her tapering masts and fine lines, lying like a duck on the heaving surges of the Nassau roadstead. But her chief attraction in my eyes was the high reputation for seamanship and prudence which her commander had acquired. With his sailing vessel, Captain Harrison had made six successful trips, four to Charleston and two to Wilmington, in the very teeth of the blockading squadron. In each case he had safely delivered a valuable cargo to the Confederate consignees, and had made the run home with

a freight of cotton for the Lancashire market, and though chased, had got off scot-free, while fast steamers were daily being sunk or driven ashore. In these bold and dexterous evasions of the Federal fleet the merchant captain had amassed a considerable sum of money, and this was to be the Saucy Jane's last visit to a Southern port, at least with her present commander.

"It's profitable work, very," said the daring young sailor, as he told me of his intention over a glass of wine in his little cabin, when our passages had been definitively engaged and paid for on board the schooner; "but it's too like gambling to suit my taste, and I can't get out of my head that saying about the pitcher that goes often to the well. All I've made in six double trips—a tidy lump of dollars—is aboard the craft now, in the shape of quinine, and negro-cloth, and shoes, and fire-arms, ready to yield four hundred per cent profit if I can swap it for cotton, and as much more if I can land the cotton at Liverpool. And if all goes well, I can cut the concern, and sail to China in a



three-master of my own, and Mary Anne and I——”


But here Captain Harrison came to a stop, probably remembering that he had told enough of his private affairs and prospects to a stranger. I took a fancy to this high-spirited young skipper, who was a year or two my junior, but a first-rate seaman, bold as a lion, and by no means as incautiously communicative in his dealings with all the world as he had shown himself with me.

“You see,” he frankly remarked, “when a chap’s knocked about the world, from port to port, as I have done since I was bound ’prentice aboard the Hood barque, in the Rio trade, he gets to know something of physiognomy. And I saw at once that you were what you represented yourself to be, even before you showed me the letters of credit drawn and signed by your people, that my owners bank with, too, as luck would have it. But, mind you, the island’s choke-full of spies. They’re about us all day long on one pretence or another, like wasps round a comb of honey. And there isn’t so much as a word buzzed

ashore that doesn't find its way, by fair means or foul, to that beauty there."

Captain Harrison pointed to a dim speck hovering far out at sea, 'beyond the mouth of the bay, above which curled a thin wreath of dusky vapour. This was the United States steam-sloop Pocahontas, whose peculiar duty it was to watch Nassau and the ships anchored there. This vessel was perpetually a source of annoyance, not only to the merchants of the place, but also to the authorities. She was fond of lying, with steam up, ports open, and a spring on her cable, near some ship that was notoriously on the eve of departure for the Southern ports. And even now, when in compliance with the governor's peremptory commands, enforced by the presence of her Majesty's ship Fury, she had reluctantly retired to the prescribed limits of one marine league, she remained there as long as her coal would serve her, in hopes of cutting off some would-be blockade runner in the outset of her career.

On shore there were other dangers. Lean, wiry men, with keen features and restless eyes, were constantly to be met with at the bars of






the hotels and taverns, from the handsomest hostelrys down to the low-browed cabins where coarse Mexican corn-brandy was sold, and these, though loud and blatant as to their Southern sympathies, were nevertheless in constant communication with the American consul. More specious spies, either real Europeans or affecting the garb and speech of natives of the old continent, lurked in the boarding-houses, on the wharves, about the merchants' offices, and beguiled the unwary into conversation on the engrossing topic of the contraband trade. The sailors belonging to the different ships about to sail were so often tampered with, that many captains found it necessary to refuse all shore leave, lest the hour of departure should be signalled to the Federal cruiser lying in the offing, like a vulture on the wing. That she was signalled every night, by some concerted system of lights displayed from house-tops on shore, was no secret to any one in Nassau.

I was by no means the only person eager to avail myself of the opportunity of crossing in the Saucy Jane to the mainland. Several parties, even of the more cautious among the

Southerners, had arranged to embark when the time for sailing should arrive, and the number of passengers was only restricted by two circumstances, one of which was, that the rate of fare demanded was considerable, and the other, that Captain Harrison was strict in his scrutiny of his would-be guests, and declined to encumber his cabins with either "loafers" or suspected spies.


I remember well, on the very day on which we were to go on board and await the land breeze to waft us smoothly out of harbour, under cover of the darkness, that a tap, a hesitating, timid tap, resounded against the panels of my door, the door of my room in Willing's Hotel. I was sitting alone in the wooden balcony under the striped awning that kept off the rays of the almost tropical sun, meditating, as I discussed my cigar, on the strange nature of the affair in which I found myself engaged. There was a singular dash of lawlessness about the business that contrasted oddly with the usual tenor of our quiet Lombard-street life, and the very idea of having to steal away, secretly and under cloud of night, from Nassau,



was anything but agreeable to a man of orderly and peaceful habits. However, I recollected the helpless children and their almost equally dependent mother, for whose safety I was responsible, and I consoled myself with the hope that in a few days at most my duty would be discharged, and the danger past. I had got so far in my musings when the tap I have mentioned caused me to turn my face towards the door, and in answer to my summons to "Come in," a strange figure presented itself in my apartment.

The intruder was a tall, corpulent old man, in the costume of a Roman Catholic priest, but of so antiquated and grotesque a fashion that I found it extremely hard to suppress a smile as its wearer approached me, bowing and smiling with oily deference. His twinkling black eyes were meekly lowered as they met mine, and from the huge shovel-hat that he carried in one sun-burnt hand, the knotted fingers of which were adorned with silver rings, down the black cotton stockings and square toed shoes that protected his feet, the visitor might have sat for the portrait

of a French village curé of the time of Louis the Fifteenth. And a curé he was, as well as I could gather from the perplexing jargon of mingled French and Spanish, eked out by a few oddly pronounced English phrases, in which he addressed me. His name he told me, was the Padre or Père (for he used both terms indifferently) Duchochois, Antoine Duchochois, parish priest of St. Gaspard, a village in Louisiana, in that wild region of unhealthy morasses that is called the Bayou Teche country. This district, as I was aware, neither Butler nor Banks had proved able to subdue to the Federal sway, and there my new acquaintance had the spiritual charge of a poor and primitive population, who lived chiefly by fishing and the culture of rice among the swampy fields. Very few of the padre's parishioners, white, red, or black, could speak anything but French or Spanish, for even the seigneur to whom the estate belonged by charter was a genuine Creole colonist of the old stamp, and on this ground M. Duchochois begged me to excuse his ignorance of English, which it was rarely necessary for him to use.



But the poor padre's tale was a pitiful one. He had been on a tour which he called a "quête," and which was, in fact, a prolonged begging excursion on behalf of his needy flock, since the scanty substance of these simple people had been wantonly destroyed by a party of Federal foragers, who had burned all that they could not carry off, and the coasting vessel, in which the priest had embarked, had been run down by an English brig on its return voyage from Matamoras to New Providence. The captain of the merchantman had done all that could be expected of him in setting the Padre ashore at Nassau, and in giving him a few dollars by way of compensation for his slender stock of wearing apparel, which had gone to the bottom of the sea. But poor M. Duchochois was in much perplexity, anxious to get back to his parish and his people, sore afraid of the Yankees, whom he seemed to regard as devouring dragons, and quite unable to raise the funds needful to pay for a passage for himself and his Indian servant-boy, Blaise, to South Carolina. Once there, the curé had no

doubt that from priest to priest, and from convent to convent, he could get passed on to his own rustic dwelling-place; but in Nassau, where all were absorbed in the gainful traffic of the hour, and where few could even understand his speech, the unfortunate ecclesiastic was quite at a loss.

In this strait, hearing that I was an Englishman, and reading, as he was polite enough to say, some hope in my face, poor M. Duchochois had come to throw himself on my compassion. Would I kindly use my influence with some ship captain to convey him and his boy Blaise over to the continent? They would not be troublesome passengers. They would *ranger* themselves, they would creep into some hole or corner on board the ship, and remain as quiet and unobtrusive as mice. They would not ask for anything more than permission to occupy a little space on board the vessel. A little biscuit and a melon or two they could take on board with them—bah! a bagatelle! they should cost the honourable captain nothing for their subsistence. And for their passage the padre

would pay in prayers and an old man's blessing, for which, at any rate, M. le Capitaine Anglais would be none the worse. Would I intercede for him ?

Now the curé was a grotesque personage in appearance, and he looked inconceivably ridiculous, as he squeezed his portly person into a corner of the room by way of exemplifying his intention to "effacer" himself when on board. And when I thought of so fleshy a churchman subsisting on water-melon and dry biscuit, I felt a thrill of the same incredulity as that which was experienced by the Black Knight in *Ivanhoe* when Friar Tuck began to munch the dried peas. But I took a liking to the priest for all that, and could not help respecting him for the feeling manner in which he spoke of his tawny parishioners, his "poor shorn sheep," for whose sake he had gone abroad as a clerical mendicant. And I readily promised to use my utmost endeavours to obtain for him the small boon he craved. The priest's eyes filled with tears when I spoke kindly to him. He thrust his hand into the pocket of his threadbare black

soutane, drew out a tin snuff-box, and held it to me, open, with a little humble bow and a French grin of thankfulness. I do not like snuff, and it makes me sneeze, but I remembered Sterne, and the Franciscan monk at Calais, with his little horn box, and I took a pinch as cordially as I could. And just then a louder tap came to the door, and in bounced Captain Harrison.

The Saucy Jane's captain had come to give me some final instructions on the subject of embarking. We were on no account to come off before dusk from the shore, for though the Federal cruiser had met with some damage to her machinery, and was in harbour and under repairs, a suspicious steamer had been espied to seaward, and it was rumoured that the San Jacinto was off the coast. Seeing that I was not alone, the skipper would have retired, but I begged him to stay, and introduced the padre, with a brief statement of the latter's misfortunes, and a hint that it would be a charitable act to carry him safely across to the mainland.

Harrison knit his brows at first, and keenly




inspected the appearance of this petitioner for a free passage, but before long the young sailor's frown relaxed, and it was with a good-humoured smile that he said he would talk the matter over with his steward, and, if a berth could be found for the priest, he would send me word before sunset. In truth, a much more suspicious person than the skipper must have been disarmed by a survey of worthy M. Duchochois, as he stood, the picture of piteous eagerness, with his horn-rimmed spectacles pushed up to his forehead, and with the marks of snuffy tears very visible on his sallow cheeks, his iron grey hair hanging down over the collar of his shabby soutane. Indeed, so childlike and simple was the poor old curé's anxiety to have his boon granted him, that neither Harrison nor I could resist his wistful look, and my exclamation of, "Upon my word, captain, the poor old gentleman must be one of us, if I pay the fare myself," was simultaneously uttered with Harrison's more genial, "Cheer up, Monsieur le Curé, or whatever you call yourself. You shall be very welcome to a passage aboard us,

you and your black boy, and we'll answer for it you shan't have lost flesh by the time we drop anchor in Charleston——Hilloa! what on the earth is the man about?"

For the padre, vehement in his gratitude, had caught hold of Harrison's hand and insisted on kissing it in sign of thankfulness, while his polyglot blessings fell thickly on us both. With some difficulty the ecclesiastic was induced to calm his transports of joy, and he left the hotel to return, as he said, to the poor lodging in which he had left his servant, and what few necessities he still possessed, with the understanding that he was to return at sundown, when he could embark with the rest of the party.

"One word," cried Harrison, as if a sudden thought had occurred to him, while the padre's hand was still upon the handle of the door "monsieur, pas un mot, keep it dark, will you, about your appointment this evening, do you understand?" But the padre looked as blinkingly unapprehensive of our commander's meaning as an owl in the daylight.



“Plait-il, M. le Capitaine?” he asked timidly, and off came the shovel-hat again. I was obliged to explain in French that the skipper had reasons for wishing the curé to keep his approaching departure a secret from any acquaintances the latter might have formed in the little town, and this M. Duchochois readily and humbly agreed to do, though with no gleam of intelligence in his round black eyes.

“May I go now, messieurs?” said the priest, with another bow, and we exchanged salutations, and parted.


“That parson will never set the Thames on fire, poor old boy!” laughed Harrison, as the curé’s footfall died away in the distance. The skipper only stayed to give me some parting instructions as to the particular part of the wharf where we were to embark, rather a more secluded spot than the quay in front of the hotel. Thither our baggage was to be conveyed through the network of narrow lanes behind the wharves, so as to avoid unfriendly observation. And, once past the point where the San Jacinto lay watching for prey, the

captain of the Saucy Jane had few fears of a successful termination to the voyage.


How I watched the sun go down on that evening; suffusing the sea with rainbow tints that presently merged into rose colour, deep crimson, and blood-red of the darkest hue, and so abruptly faded out, and left the surface of the water as dusky as indigo. There was very little moon, and though the stars shone out white and brilliant, fog-wreaths came curling over the waters as the land-breeze began to sigh through the rigging of the ships in the bay. As we were cautiously rowed out to where the Saucy Jane lay, with her brailed-up canvas shaking loosely on boom and yard, every flash of the oars elicited a phosphorescent gleam from the gently heaving water. The passengers and their baggage filled two large boats and a dory, and we were among the occupants of the first boat. By we, I mean Mrs. Bolton and her little girls, myself, and the padre and his Indian boy. The last mentioned, a spare copper-skinned lad, dressed in blue cotton, and with a yellow silk handkerchief tied tightly round his lank black

hair, like the fillet worn by horse-riders in a circus, sat impassive behind his master, and looked more like a bronze statue than a living creature. The padre, on the other hand, was full of simple elation and good spirits. He chuckled and talked in his queer jargon, making every one smile, and was evidently overjoyed at his good fortune. Mrs. Bolton—poor little woman—was in a more cheerful frame of mind than I had yet seen her in. Hitherto we had been met by baffling delays on all hands, but now we were fairly off—really “going to Henry at last,” as she said; and I heard her murmuring to her little ones that they should “soon see papa, now.”

The instant we were all aboard, and had answered to our names as the steward read them off from his list by the shaded light of a ship lantern, anchor was weighed, quickly but cautiously. There was no shrilly piercing fife to encourage the men—no hearty chant of Yo, heave, yo! as the crew went stamping round after the spinning capstan bars. But if the work was done silently, it was expeditiously performed, and as if by magic the



broad sails dropped from their festoons, and the gallant schooner, spreading her white wings like an albatross, glided off to seaward. A sigh of satisfaction burst from many hearts as the vessel began to move from her anchorage. Mr. Trent's niece was not the only one on board whose hopes and affections centered in the land towards which our prow now pointed. The breeze was steady, and the Saucy Jane, slightly heeling over in response to its welcome breath, flew through the water at a rate that proved how well she deserved her reputation as a fast sailing craft. Still the utmost caution was preserved. No lights were shown. Captain Harrison conned the schooner himself, nor did his vigilance appear to relax, until, more than an hour after we had left our moorings, he laid his hand familiarly on my shoulder, saying, "All right, now, Mr. Phillips. Do you see that faint blotch of crimson, red and yellow, the smoky light three miles off; no, more to leeward? That is the San Jacinto. The Yankees won't make much of us this time, or my name's not Jack Harrison.



And, indeed, a more fortunate voyage, to all appearance, no vessel had ever made. Day after day the weather was beautiful, the sea smooth, and the winds, though light, still favourable. We saw no Federal cruisers. Twice, indeed, we fell in with armed vessels, but these our skipper's experienced eye recognised as British ships of war, even before they drew near enough for the red, white, and blue of the Union Jack to be visible by means of our best glasses. And on one sultry afternoon the cry of "Land, ho!" was raised, and the Southern exiles on board set up a cry of joy, and clapped their hands exultingly, for they knew that the low blue line, like a cloud bank, could be no other than the coast of South Carolina.

Somewhat to the disappointment of his lady passengers, however, the captain declined to sail into Charleston harbour, as he might easily have done, before sunset on that evening. He knew too well that to make such an attempt would simply be to run into the lion's mouth. We could see no Federal cruiser at that moment, but there could be no doubt

that many war vessels of every calibre and class, from the ferry-boat hastily armed with a branch of nine-inch Parrot guns, to the swift steam frigate, lay lurking among the numerous islands that skirt the coast so thickly. It would have been folly to have run the gauntlet through the Yankee squadron in broad daylight, whereas by night the chance of eluding hostile eyes was an excellent one. Harrison knew the entrance to the harbour well; his memory for shoals and sand-banks, for channels and shallows, was remarkable, and one of his crew was a Charleston man born, and well qualified to act as a pilot in his native waters.

The schooner was, therefore, moored, stem and stern, close under the shelter of a convenient islet, a long low strip of sand, crested by palmettoes and overgrown with brushwood, and which intervened between us and the blockading squadron. The sails were furled, the colours hauled down, and the *Saucy Jane* lay concealed, only her bare masts rising gaunt and indistinct over the tufted trees of the islet. It was confidently believed that the



best telescopes on board the Federal men-of-war would fail to distinguish any trace of our whereabouts, while, towards midnight, we could resume our voyage with a fair prospect of success. The vessel lay in deep water, so close to the shore that a couple of planks were thrust out as a bridge to connect the gangway with the sand-bank, and most of us gladly availed ourselves of the opportunity for a ramble on dry land. Mrs. Bolton, whose spirits had improved as we approached the country she so longed to reach, was one of the group of ladies who visited the islet, where the children were delighted to run and play on the firm white beach, covered with bright shells, and whence terapins and other small turtles floundered hastily at the approach of a human foot, and splashed into the limpid blue water beneath. With this party was the padre, M. Duchochois. This worthy ecclesiastic had become a general favourite on board, thanks to his quaint good-nature, and amusing eccentricities. People could not help laughing at him, but they liked him, and the children, who teased him a good deal at first,

had ended by voting him grand master of their revels.

A curious sight it was, that of a cluster of little boys and girls, unconscious of the peril that might accrue from the neighbourhood of the Federal foes, gathered around the tall old curé, and with eager gestures appealing to him to devise some new game for them to play at. And it was none the less curious to watch the curé himself, as intent on the amusement of the moment, apparently, as his little friends, taking snuff noisily, and volubly chatting in his strange dialect of three languages woven into one. The ladies on board the Saucy Jane, who had at first been somewhat shocked at the uncouthness of this poor priest, now voted him a dear good creature, and a subscription had been already proposed for the purpose of sending him and his Indian servant-lad home to St. Gaspard. This lad, Blaise, whom the children had dubbed Man Friday, was a taciturn boy, like all his race, but evidently attached to the priest with an almost canine fidelity. He was seldom far from his master, but on this occasion he was

not, as usual, ready to hold the large red-cotton umbrella over the head of M. Duchochois, a ceremony which he often gravely performed on deck.

Meanwhile, several of the male passengers, with Captain Harrison, sat smoking their cigars in a shady nook of the islet, screened from the sun's rays by the long drooping leaves of the feathery palmettoes overhead, and almost walled in by thickets of the oleander, the nopal, and the prickly pear, gorgeous with large red blossoms. Everybody seemed happy and hopeful. Suddenly the captain sprang to his feet, with a fierce oath that died away into a shout of anger :

“Hilloa ! on board there. Who did that ?”

One of the mates, lounging half asleep over the taffrail, looked up with surprise at the sound of his commander's voice.


“Look alive, there ! Who loosed that sail ?” cried the captain.

And, as we all glanced upwards, we saw, to our astonishment, that the maintopsail of the schooner was loose, and heavily flapping to and fro in the freshening breeze, like the

broad wing of some wounded sea-bird. It needed but a glimpse of Harrison's look of wrathful dismay, as he sprang on board and gave his orders—orders that instantly sent three or four seamen scrambling hurriedly up the rigging to reduce the sail—to assure us that mischief was afoot. In a very short time the fluttering canvass was close reefed, but to discover the offender who had cast the sail loose was less easy. In vain the captain sternly interrogated such of the crew as had been on deck. All declared that they knew nothing of the matter. One sailor, who had been dozing under the bulwarks aft, did, indeed, say that he had opened his eyes a few minutes before, and had, while in a state between sleeping and waking, seen some one jump out of the standing rigging, and slip down the fore-hatchway. And it was his belief that this person was no other than the padre's boy, Indian Blaise.

But Blaise was found fast asleep in his lair below, and he did not seem even to understand what was said to him when he was asked, in French, whether he had been aloft

lately. He shook his head in dissent, however, and indeed no one had ever seen the Indian ascend the rigging, or believed him capable of getting high enough to loosen the sail, even if there had been any comprehensible reason for such an act on his part. The most natural conjecture was that the sail had been carelessly secured, and the captain's only hope was that the tell-tale canvass had not attracted the eyes of any sharp-sighted look-out man on board of a Federal ship. And as hour passed after hour, and no column of smoke rose black against the darkening violet sky, giving token of the unwelcome approach of an enemy, we breathed more freely again, and all looked forward to breakfasting in Charleston itself. The sun went down sinking into a bank of grey clouds, and there were signs of a probable change of weather, but still the sea was calm. We were all aboard again, supper was over, and the lights were extinguished, and the passengers in their berths, somewhat earlier than usual. The deck was left to the watch, and as the schooner's bell told off the hours we knew



that the time for sailing would soon arrive. I was lying, half-dressed, on the tiny bed in my little cabin, when I heard a voice say, in a husky, smothered tone,—“Not yet! Japh! I see one of the Britishers leaning over the side, forward. Keep in the shadow.”

And then followed a gentle splashing sound, and a faint tapping against the planking, as if some boat or canoe were being guided along the schooner's side by the joint force of a paddling oar and a human hand that grasped the woodwork of the vessel's side and drew the boat forward. Of this I should have thought little—nothing was more likely than that a boat should have been lowered for some purpose connected with our getting clear of the sand-banks and sunken rocks that were numerous in our immediate proximity—but the words were suspicious, and the voice was wonderfully like that of the good old priest, M. Duchochois. For a moment I hesitated as to whether I should seek the captain or one of the mates to communicate what I had heard, but the more I thought of the matter the less certain was I that I had

caught the exact meaning of the speaker. I had been drowsy and only half awake, and the very notion that the curé had been the owner of the voice was a manifest absurdity that made me consider the whole affair unworthy a second thought. I listened, but could hear nothing, and soon sank into a real slumber.

I was awakened by the quick tramp of feet overhead, the word of command, the rattling down of coils of rope upon the deck, the quick wash of the surging water along the schooner's sides. Evidently sail had been made on the Saucy Jane, and we were heading for Charleston harbour. I got up, threw on my upper garments, and went on deck, where I found two or three of the male passengers. They were talking together near the stern with excited gestures, but in cautious tones. As I drew near, I caught the words "the boat," and at once asked if anything had gone wrong.

"Yes, Mr. Phillips, the dingey's missing," said one of the Southerners, a tall Georgian, who bore the title of major; "it was the

only boat towing astern, as you may have noticed, all the others being on board. Just before sailing it was found to have disappeared, though in what manner——”

“Captain Harrison suspects,” interrupted another; but he was interrupted in his turn by the captain, who came quickly up, and said in a voice that shook with suppressed anger:

“There’s treachery afoot, gentlemen. The plugs have been removed from the bottom of every boat, and not an oar but has been sawn through just above the blade. Some rascally traitor must——”

“Sail, ho!” sung out the sailor from the mast-head. “A large ship on the weather bow.”

“Sail, ho! a steamer to leeward!” called out the look-out man in the bows.

The captain started, sprang into the rigging, and took a hasty survey of the probable enemy. As he did so, the red flash of a cannon-shot lit the darkness of the night, and the bellowing report followed sullenly over the waters.



“Down helm, you ! put her about ! smartly, now, my lads !” shouted the captain ; but another flash succeeded, and down came the schooner’s mainboom, mainsail and all, thundering upon the deck, knocking down and bruising several of the crew, while a third shot crashed into the deck, and made the white splinters fly. Escape was impossible in our crippled condition. We backed the topsails, and in ten minutes more a large dark steamer had ranged alongside. We were immediately boarded by a powerful force of armed seamen and marines, and declared a lawful prize to the U.S. steam-sloop *Susquehannah*.

By the light of the battle lanterns we were all paraded on deck as prisoners, when what was our amazement at recognising in the lieutenant who commanded the boarders no less a personage than the curé of St. Gaspard, the Rev. M. Duchochois. Yes, there could be no mistake about it. The shovel-hat and shabby soutane and horn spectacles had been replaced by navy blue cloth, a gold-laced cap, and a belt, in which a revolver

balanced the cutlass that hung on the left side, but the crafty black eyes were those of our late protégé, though the expression was wholly changed.

“Yes, gentlemen ; ladies, your humble servant,” said the spy, with a sneer of triumphant malice ; “old Papa Duchochois, very much at your service in his new capacity of lieutenant in Uncle Sam’s navy, you rebel green-horns.”

And, indeed, the villain, for the part he had played in practising on our compassion was to enable him the better to betray us, was Lieutenant Aminadab Hitch, of the *Susquehanna*, while grinning at his principal’s side, with the copper-coloured pigment but half washed from his cunning face, was the *ci-devant* Indian boy, Blaise, alias Japhet Bunch, a Yankee corporal of marines. We heard afterwards that the lieutenant, who was famous for his power of personating an assumed character, had visited Nassau for the express purpose of securing the prize money of so valuable a capture as the *Saucy Jane* to his own war vessel. It was his

accomplice, the pretended Indian lad, who had stealthily ascended the rigging and loosened the sail to give notice to the look-out men of the sloop of the whereabouts of the blockade runner. After this, the two worthies had stolen the dingey, first disabling the other boats from pursuit, and had pulled out to sea, where, as they had expected, they had seen a preconcerted signal from their own ship, and had been picked up by her before we approached the channel through which the false curé was aware of the skipper's intention to pass. Had we even eluded the Susquehanna, we must have been infallibly sunk or taken by the Portland, which was awaiting us on the other tack.

I do not wish to dwell on the scenes of misery that ensued on board the schooner when husbands were torn from their wives, and fathers separated from their children, to be consigned to the dreary captivity of Forts Warren and Lafayette. Nor was it pleasant to see the despair of my charge, poor Mrs. Bolton, whose hopes of seeing her husband again in life were, to all appearance,

dashed to the ground when on the eve of being realised ; while, to poor Captain Harrison, the affair was simply ruin. The sight of his pale angry face haunts me still, as he was led away to be placed in irons, like the rest of the crew and officers. However, the caprice or mercy of the Federal authorities procured the release of Mrs. Bolton, as well as of several of the other ladies, after a short detention ; and, though I was not myself permitted to accompany my charge within the Confederate lines, I was glad to hear that she and her children had arrived safely at Charleston, and still more glad to hear that Captain Bolton's recovery was considered probable. And thus ended what was my first, and will most assuredly be my last, experience of blockade running.

## THE OHIO OIL WELL.

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THE mare swerved, dashing the high lightly built gig against a stump by the side of the narrow road; off flew the spidery wheel; down came the fast-trotting chesnut; and out like a brace of rockets were flung the driver and myself. There was a moment of scuffling, floundering, and general entanglement, while a thousand sparks of fire danced before my eyes, and then I was creeping away from the broken wreck, when I heard Ben, the driver, cry suddenly: "J'hoshaphat, mister, mind her heels, or you're a gone coon!" And I have an indistinct remembrance of receiving two or three stunning blows from what seemed to be a blacksmith's sledge-hammer,

and of hearing a loud shout of human voices as I fainted.

When I again opened my eyes I found myself lying on a bank, a few yards from the spot where the accident had occurred. The smashed gig lay in the roadway, but the mare had long since kicked herself free, and was gone. Ben, my careless or unlucky charioteer, stood dolefully whistling, with the whip in his hand. His face was scratched, and his garments were muddy, but he seemed uninjured, though dismayed. Six or seven men in working clothes were lounging about, and apparently conversing on the subject of the recent upset, but only one seemed to concern himself about my personal condition. He was a tall muscular young fellow, with a fine handsome face, and a rich bronzed complexion. He was better dressed as well as better looking than the others, though he wore homespun cloth, while the rest of the party were in patched and discoloured suits of black. Kneeling beside me on the bank, this young farmer—for it was easy to guess his rank in life—was supporting my

head with a gentleness that seemed wonderful for one of his thews and sinews.

"Labour lost, Joe," observed one shabby smoker from his seat: which, by the way, was on the very stump that had occasioned the accident. "The Britisher, or Dutchman, or whatever he be, air as dead as Julep Cæsar."

Weak and ill as I was, there was something in this conversion of the Dictator's name into a Yankee idiom which tickled my risible nerves, and I gave a feeble chuckle.

"He's alive, I tell you," answered Joe; "though it does sicken a chap, a few, to git such a pounding as that. I'd like to see you, Zack Brown, after such a dose of cold iron. You'd sing a trifle less positive, or I ain't Joe Mallory."

There was a laugh, which Joe cut short by asking which of the bystanders had some "whisky medicine" about him? A bottle of this potent cordial having been produced, the farmer put it to my lips, and with arbitrary kindness forced me to swallow as much of the

fiery liquor as I could imbibe without actual suffocation.

"I know'd," said Joe, in a dogmatic way, "what puts new life into a man in such a case as this, though I ain't overfond of the monongahela in gin'ral. Do ye feel to be stronger, sir, now?"

This was addressed to me, and I contrived to answer by some feeble acknowledgment of his Samaritan kindness.

"No bones bruk?" inquired Joe, adding, as I shook my head, "then mebbe you could make a shift to walk, leanin' on me? Sparta ain't above a big mile off."

I tried to rise, and with the help of the young farmer I did contrive to reach my feet, but I could not keep them. One ankle was smartly sprained, the foot having been awkwardly twisted under me as I fell; and I sank down with a groan, as helpless as a rag effigy of a man. It became incumbent to carry me; and the bystanders, now they were quite satisfied that I was alive, volunteered with a pretty good grace to assist in my removal. A light iron gate that gave admission into a



field hard by, and which contrasted oddly with the rough worm fence of unbarked wood, was taken off its hinges to form a litter, and I was borne away on this impromptu palanquin.

Ben the driver had by this time set off in plodding pursuit of the truant mare; but, before starting, he halloed out a stentorian request to know "wheer they were takin' his stranger tew, because Major Staines might like to action him in county court for the gig."

I could hardly help laughing again, though my bones ached cruelly, at the suggestion of suing a man for the damage done in half killing him, but I felt a thrill of languid pleasure when my protector rejoined,

"Darn the major and his actions! He won't cl'ar many dollars that way, for 'tain't fust time that tearin' chesnut brute have made a smash of wood and iron, let alone humans. That mare's unpopular in the country, and no jury would give a red cent if her neck was bruk. Anyhow, if the major wants


a dose of law, tell him the stranger's under Joe Mallory's roof."

The other men gave a growl of surprise.

"Why, Joe," said he who was called Zach Brown, "I reckoned we'd jest drop the chap at Dan Hunt's, the taverner's. You oughter hev more wrinkles by this than to lumber up your house with a critter that wants a deal of waitin' on, and mebbe hasn't shinplasters enough to pay for his board."

I made some answer to this, or rather I began to assure my hearers that I was better provided with money than they perhaps guessed from my scanty luggage and plain dress; but Joe Mallory pressed his broad hand on my mouth to silence me, and angrily told Zach that "when he sent in a bill for food and shelter to a hurt traveller, he hoped niggers would trample on him."

Zach said no more, and before long I was carried into the young farmer's house, and laid on a bed. The men were going at once, after taking a dram of whiskey, but I insisted on remunerating each of them with a dollar, which after some hesitation, they consented to



receive for "loss of time." Very odd fellows they were—honest, I am sure ; proud, in their way, as Hoosiers almost always are ; and not wilfully unkind, but blunt of feelings themselves and coarsely indifferent to the feelings of others. Before they departed, I heard one of them ask Joe, in no smothered tone, "what whim made him have the stranger up there?" to which Joe made answer, in a more subdued tone, that "Dan's tavern was no place for a delicate town-raised critter to be ill in, and that it was plain I felt the banging more than I said."

When the men were gone, the master of the house called aloud the respective names of "Aunty !" "Phillis !" and "Terence !" but no answer was returned. Muttering that he would soon return, my new friend strode out into the yard, whence issued the familiar sounds produced by gobbling turkeys, lowing calves, and grumbling pigs. The house was a long low structure, mainly composed of timber, with chimneys of brick ; but it was very substantial and roomy. The chamber in which I had been placed, was one of a nest of

similar rooms, opening into a passage, at the end of which was the great kitchen, decorated with dangling hams, smoked venison, corn cobs, barrels of pickled pork, huge yellow pumpkins, and sundry shelves of pewter and New England crockery. At the other end was a door, seldom opened, leading into the best parlour: where stood the smart furniture, the china, fine linen, and so forth, never used but at wedding, funeral, or christening. The quilt on which I lay was of a coarse quality, but scrupulously clean; the brown rough sheets of the bed were very clean too; the pine planks of the floor, thanks to soap and water, were as white as the glaring walls on which hung a few cheap coloured prints of Bonaparte's battles, and the Queen of Sheba's visit to Solomon. The house was that of a tolerably well-to-do Western farmer: rather neater than the majority, but with no luxury or ostentation. While I was musing on the strange quarters in which I found myself, my host returned, accompanied by a negro girl and an old white woman, dressed pretty much alike in common cotton prints of Lo-

well make. There was a great difference in their behaviour, however, for while the negress, whom I shrewdly guessed to be the Phillis so often called in vain, merely grinned a salutation, the old woman bustled up to my bedside in a moment.

"You're welcome, stranger," said she, "but we can talk 'nother time, I guess. A nasty tumble! What a bruise that is on your temple—I'll jest fix that—Phillis, the bottle off the shelf in my room, third from the end—jump and get it, and be spry, do. That gal moves as if she'd lead in her shoes. All them darkies do. Sprained your foot, eh, mister? Let me turn it about—so, does that hurt you? then, run, Joe, and get the black box. I've got somethin' there woundy good for sprains."

Joe good-humouredly hurried off to fetch the rude medicine-chest, saying with a pleasant laugh that "he knowed aunty be glad of the job. She *was* a nurse, if ever any woman was."

Certainly Miss Esther Mallory, Joe's aunt, was a born nurse, as well as a born gossip.

She could do anything and everything that was required in a sick-room, except hold her tongue. Talk she must, and while with real kindness and untiring skill she applied bandages and lotions to my bruised head and arm and my sprained ankle ; while she brewed me tea and barley-water ; while she adjusted the pillows under my head, and superintended Phillis in the boiling of a chicken for my supper ; she never ceased to intermit the rapid flow of her discourse.

From this notable female, in the course of the evening, I heard all the family history. How the Mallorys had migrated West from their original abode in New Jersey, where they had been, my hostess rather boastfully said, since William and Mary. How she, Esther Mallory, had been induced, sorely against her will, to accompany her two brothers, Joe's uncle and father, to the then half-known wilds of Ohio. How she had been there a long time, and didn't half like it, and had seen great changes, and didn't half like them, and thought New Jersey the true Eden upon earth. Further, the good old maid related how Joe's

uncle had died of fever, and how Joe had succeeded his father in the property, two years before, while she had stayed to keep house for him till he got a wife, being fully determined to go back as soon as her nephew's marriage should take place, and live on her savings, or, as she called them, "money-scrapes," in her native village.

Miss Esther was about sixty : angular, raw-boned, with a hard-featured face puckered into as many wrinkles as a withered apple, with keen blue eyes, and brisk active movements. I had seen many women in New England who might have been her twin-sisters, and I knew the race well—thrifty clean bustling busy-bodies, with a supreme contempt for the dawdlers and slatterns down South. A good cook was Miss Esther, a good manager, a skilled sempstress, but a better nurse. If she could do any one thing better than another it was tending the sick, and I believe she felt personally grateful to me for giving her an occasion of exhibiting her knowledge and adroitness. At any rate she was very affable and chatty, and took the opportunity of Joe's

absence to sing her nephew's praises' adding :  
" Poor lad ! poor lad ! He's a heavy heart,  
for all he tries to keep up a smilin' face. Drat  
love and sentiment, sez I."


I started. Sure enough, my kind young host had a melancholy look, unaccountable in one in robust health, tolerably well off, and evidently respected by his neighbours. I had noticed it before, but my bruised limbs and throbbing temples had put the matter out of court, until Miss Esther's remark aroused my curiosity and sympathy. Little pressing was needed to elicit from the garrulous aunt what, after all, was no secret. Joe Mallory had been for some time the accepted lover of Susan Boone, only daughter of Deacon Gabriel Boone, one of the most comfortable farmers in the district, and who, as Miss Esther said, was "rather uppish" about family, being own cousin to the renowned General Daniel Boone, the explorer of Kentucky. The marriage had unluckily been postponed : a circumstance due, I fancy, to Miss Esther's own obstructiveness, since it was her desire that "a good chist full of linen web" should be spun at home



previous to the establishment of the young bride as mistress of the house. In the interval, a new discovery had subverted the old order of things. This was no other than the discovery of petroleum, or, as Miss Esther called it, "the ile." It had been found, its value had been greedily appreciated by a population not very apt to let any source of profit slip through their fingers, and the favoured tract of country, Ohio, New York, and Pennsylvania, as well as Canada West, had ever since been in a fever of speculation. Here were diggings, not indeed auriferous, but of a substance capable of transmutation into five-dollar notes, brought home to the very doors of the people. Of course property maintained its rights; there was no scramble; but some grew rich by finding wealth bubbling up at their very thresholds, and among this number was Deacon Boone, Susan's father.

One of the two "flowing wells" of rock oil which had come to light in the parish of Sparta was on Deacon Boone's land. Luckier than most of his neighbours, almost all of whom had oil beneath their fields, but oil

only to be raised by expensive pumping, after the spade and mattock had done their work, the old deacon was proprietor of an absolute spring of the odoriferous liquid, which seemed inexhaustible. Thousands of gallons, every drop of which had its market value, daily spouted and splashed into the air, and an immense per-centage of the produce was lost for lack of barrels and labour. Under these circumstances it is not wonderful that Deacon Boone, always a weak vain man, lost his head, and grew, as Miss Esther quaintly said, "most too proud to dirty his shoes walkin'." This elation was accompanied by coldness of demeanour towards his old friends, whom he was loth any longer to regard in the light of equals, and by an ominous coldness of bearing towards his intended son-in-law. Besides this, he had dropped hints of the brilliant prospects in store for his family; hints that struck poor Joe with dismay, since his position was altered now. A little while before, Joe, with a tidy farm and a little sum in bank, had been a reasonably good match for the daughter of a corn and cattle factor; but



he was become relatively poor when compared with the fortunate owner of a flowing well of wealth.

"And the young lady herself?" asked I, with some interest; "is she as mercenary as her father? As ready to give up a poor suitor, in hopes of a better match afterwards, I mean?"

Miss Esther answered rather slowly, as she plied her knitting needles over the fast growing stocking of unbleached wool.

"Wall! I hairdly know, sir. Young gals are that flighty and flim, they don't know the differ atween yes and no, sometimes. Susan likes our Joe well enough, but her father and mother are nouthar of 'em over-stocked with sense, and they go clack! clack! about how she's to be a fine lady and that, and visit Europe, and keep cumpny with grand folks, and wear sat'n and lace, and mebbe the gal's little head's getting turned. But I bel've, I do believe, her heart air a good and tender one, as it had oughter, seein' Joe desarves a good wife."

Joe, I must observe, was out just then,

looking after a 'loping deer,' which Terence, the old Irish hired man who helped on the farm, had caught a glimpse of in the corn: and therefore I had time to hear a great deal about the Boone family. Among other things was a story, the moral of which was that Deacon Boone owed Joe a debt of gratitude, which rendered his present conduct in giving him the cold shoulder peculiarly mean and contemptible. Years before, when the State of Ohio was more thinly settled, the deacon had joined a party of hunters who had brought a bear to bay. Old Boone was no experienced woodsman, but was vain and fond of applause, and perhaps had a notion that sylvan prowess ran in his blood as a kinsman of the great Nimrod, Daniel Boone; and he rashly approached the desperate animal and was caught in its dangerous embrace.

"I've heerd tell," said Miss Esther, "that the sight wur horrid. There wur the b'ar, with red eyes glittrin' with rage, and a mouth full of blood and foam, and the deacon faintin' with fright and the hug he got, and never a man durst fire, for fear they'd miss the beast

and hit the man. But our Joe—a mere boy then—what does he do but run in with his hunting knife, and soon med the b'ar drop the deacon and tackle to *him*. That war a tussle, mister, for a b'ar takes a deal of killin', and when they brought back our Joe here, he war tore to bits and all blood. You may see the great scar on his forehead yet, whar the b'ar's claws scratched him, jest as he drove the knife to its heart. T'aint every big man in the settlements, let alone a lad, cares to face a b'ar with on'y the knife; and no wonder the deacon allays petted Joe arterwards, and used to take a pleasure in seein' him and Susan together, and sayin' they'd make a handsome couple, and so they might, if 'twarn't for this weary ile."

At that moment in came Joe, moody and careworn. In answer to the question whether he had shot the deer, he rejoined bitterly that he had not, and did not care whether he never shot another.

"I know what's amiss," said his aunt, glancing up in her keen way. "You've seen Susan Boone, and she's vexed you."

"Hush, aunty!" said the young farmer, looking askance at me; but Miss Esther assured him that my presence need be no restraint, for she had told me all about it.

"You hev?" the young man exclaimed, with an angry stamp of his massive foot on the floor. But almost instantly his frank face relaxed into its usual good-humoured look, and he said, with a sad sort of laugh:

"I oughter remember she folks were born to chatter, special them that hail from down east-way. And, arter all, I'm no ways ashamed o' my share in the bizniss."

"You have no cause to be, I am sure," said I, half apologetically, "and I hope I am not intrusive when I say that, quite apart from the kind service you have rendered me, my best wishes would go with you."

The young woodsman stretched out his mighty hand, grasped mine, and gave it a friendly squeeze that seemed to make every joint and sinew crack. It hurt me, rather, but there was no mistaking the kindly intention.

"Thank'ee, mister," said Joe; "but I

reckon I'm an unlucky coon. I some fear I air. This ile that's a fortin to thousands, air jest perdition to me. Bad enough the deacon should be huffy and queer, but Susan! She hadn't oughter—she han't oughter sot more store on a pocketful of dollars than an honest man's heart. I met her, jest now at the door of the schoolhouse where the children hev been larnin' hymn-singing, and she most scorned to give me a look—she that I've known sin' we were both little trots of six year old!"

"War she alone?" asked Aunt Esther in a quick snappish voice.

"Wall, no," said Joe, reluctantly; "her parents war followin', and she was walkin' along of a smart town chap, one I know by head mark, Mr. Peter Clovis Tapper, the lawyer to Lanesville. Such a dandy fellow, with rings and yaller gloves, and scent on his white cambrick handkercher; no wonder she couldn't see *me*."

The manly young fellow cast a glance, half proud, half depreciating, on his plain working garb and brown muscular hands. Miss Esther

thereupon expressed her fears that Mr. Tapper was a new suitor, favour'd by Susan's parents, who were bent on throwing off the former engagement.

"If I re'elly thought so," said Joe, "that pretty dressed lawyer and me might hev words, we might."

As I saw the dark flush of wrath that crimsoned the backwoodsman's sun-browned face, making the scar of the bear's claw ominously white and clear on his broad honest brow ; and as I noticed how the long rifle vibrated in the grasp of his strong fingers ; I thought Peter Clovis Tapper, attorney-at-law, might wince a little at the prospect of "words" with the man he had supplanted.

Mallory, however, like most men of genuine bravery, was remarkably modest and quiet in his general demeanour, and his threatening mood passed away very quickly. He said that Susan was very young, that girls were apt to be fanciful, and that he should go on believing her true to him and her plight until he received his dismissal from her own lips. Then he broke away from the subject, talked



of my health, and congratulated me on being in Miss Esther's care: declaring what I am sure was true, that the old lady had not her equal in the country for bone-setting and bandaging. Happily, I did not find it necessary to test her skill in the former branch of art; my bruises were gradually reduced, and, but for my sprained ankle, I could soon have proceeded on my journey well enough. As it was, my hurt progressed but slowly towards recovery: sprains are tedious things, and I found a slight imprudence undid the good work of days. However, thanks to Miss Esther's washes and drops, thanks to wet bandages and the healing force of nature, I was soon able to walk in a weak slow way, with assistance. Sometimes I had the aid of Joe's strong arm, sometimes of old Terence's, and now and then black Phillis was commissioned to help my progress through the village or across the yard where the turkeys and fowls, her especial charge, gobbled and clucked in vast squadrons. There had lately been, Phillis said, three more men employed on the farm at wages: one Irishman, a nephew of

Terence, and two "coloured gentlemen," but these had all been tempted away to work at a cooperage where the people were busy, day and night, in making vats, kegs, and casks, to catch the oil which would otherwise be wasted. Much labour had been withdrawn from tillage, I learned, for the same purpose, and in many places the crops were neglected, that the mineral treasures of the earth might be garnered up. Of the crude oil I saw enough, and smelt enough, to satiate an amateur for life, during the weeks I spent at Sparta. Although there were only two flowing wells in the parish, there were plenty of pump wells, where machinery more or less rude, from the chain of hand buckets to the small steam gin or Ericsson engine, were in almost constant employment. The streams had a film of oil on their surface, the carts dripped oil, the talk of the whole neighbourhood was saturated with oil.

But the two who profited most by this sudden outpouring of an oleaginous cornucopia were Deacon Boone and another farmer, with whom the deacon was on bad terms. This was elder Hiram Rutherford, a middle-aged

man, whose land at Wyandot Creek adjoined the Mallory property. He possessed the other flowing well : a still finer one than Mr. Boone's : and it was a sore alloy to Mr. Boone's triumph to know that the person he hated was getting rich at least as rapidly as he himself was. It matters little why these two men were foes. They had thwarted each other, I believe, about some affairs of bargain and sale ; and since then, in church assemblies, sheriff's courts, market, or merry-making, they never met but to bicker and oppose each other. Elder Hiram was a gaunt lean old sinner, with white hair, a leering bloodshot eye, and a wrinkled face, replete with cunning ; whereas old Boone had a vacuous face, that expressed little beyond conceit and love of self. Mrs. Boone, whose acquaintance I also made, was a flighty silly woman, much over-dressed, and already looking forward to the time when her husband's wealth should buy her a place among the Upper Ten Thousand.


But in Susan, whom I had fancied a cold coquette, I found to my surprise a very charming girl, extremely pretty, gentle, and sweet-

tempered ; rather too much so, indeed, since she had been half-persuaded it was her duty to give up Joe. But she loved him still, and she detested Mr. Tapper, whose visits and attentions received every sanction and encouragement from her parents. It appeared that the wily young lawyer had found out the weakness of the old folks, and was dazzling them with pictures of New York grandeurs, and of the lofty position which his New York connexions would ensure to the Boone family. And at last old Boone actually found courage to tell Joe Mallory that he must give Susan up, unless, in a month's time, he could show that he had the means to "keep her as a lady."

Poor Joe was willing and able to keep her as became a farmer's wife and a farmer's daughter, and he did not ask for a cent of dowry ; but the old man was inexorable, and gave Joe plainly to understand that he intended looking elsewhere for a son-in-law. It needed no conjuror to discover where the deacon intended to look. Mr. P. C. Tapper came over, at least twice a week, from Lanesville driving his own tandem, and attended

by a black groom in a sky-blue coat; that being the nearest permissible republican approach to livery. My young host was in despair, and but that Miss Esther and I seriously took the alarm, and used all our efforts to keep him and the legal dandy apart, I have no doubt that mischief would have ensued. In this time of trouble, Susan's conduct puzzled us all. She was sincerely attached to Joe, for her eyes brightened and her cheek flushed when they met, and she was evidently unfascinated by the Lanesville lawyer; but she seemed a mere puppet in her parents' hands. The probable explanation is, that she was too young, plastic, and docile, to offer any decided opposition to the ambitious projects of the old folks.

Joe did not resign himself to useless and idle murmuring at his fate. At my suggestion he availed himself of the services of Barney Leech, the old well-sinker, whose income had been greatly increased by the petroleum discoveries, and he made a bold push to find oil upon his land, which, as I have mentioned, was next to that of Elder Hiram.




And very tantalising it was to see the thick jet of rock oil spirting from the soil at Wyandot Creek, hard by; to see men ladling it up with tubs and crocks, coopering it up in casks, stowing it in jars, old bottles, empty "breakers" of spirits, anything, and yet allowing hundreds of gallons to run to waste over the creek waters; while not a drop could Joe Mallory find.

"Sorry for it, for your sake, Mr. Mallory," said the old well-digger, when the excavation had been made, and deepened, and deepened, all in vain. "Sorry for it, but it would be robbing your pocket, I guess, to go on. A'ready you've spent dollars enough on the grope, and it's plain you'll get no ile: not if you dig through the world, mister."

This was sad news for poor Joe, who had been informed that morning by Deacon Boone that the day of grace was nearly spent, that Susan and he had best forget one another, and that from Monday next his visits at the Boones' house must cease.

I could give the poor fellow no comfort. Indeed, I had been compelled to endorse the

verdict of the experienced old well-digger, that the search was hopeless ; and my opinion, as that of a professional engineer, had great weight with Joe. I have not previously mentioned my errand in Ohio, which was connected with this very oil. My business was, to conclude a contract between several well-proprietors and the commercial firm in whose behalf I was engaged, and who had purchased my patent of a new process for refining the crude petroleum. When able to walk tolerably, I had not neglected this duty, and had concluded a bargain with Elder Rutherford for the delivery of a certain quantity of coarse oil at specified periods. With Deacon Boone I was unable to come to terms, and I should have left Sparta but for my interest in Joe, and my wish to serve him if I could, were it only by keeping him from drubbing Mr. Tapper, and incurring the risk of crushing damages at law. Joe's position with respect to Deacon Boone and his daughter was, of course, well known throughout that small community, and much sympathy was expressed for the young woodsman.



On the evening of the day when the well-digger had ceased operations, I had taken a short stroll among the wooded spurs of the hills which belt in the rich alluvial meadows, with no other companion than a stout hickory walking-stick. Rather tired, I was glad to sit down under a giant black walnut, whose spreading boughs hummed pleasantly overhead as the wind waved them, and I lazily watched the wild pigeons winging their way home towards the forests.

Presently a dead branch crackled under a heavy listless tread, and Joe came striding down the path, with his rifle cast into the hollow of his left arm, his hat pulled over his eyes, and a sullen desperate look that it was painful to mark.

I was on the point of rising to accost him, when something rustled briskly through the scrubby ravine to my left, and a low voice called out,

“Joe! hist! Joe Mallory!”

“Who calls?” answered the young man, stopping short.

“A friend, I guess!” answered the same



low hissing voice. And out from among the shrubs glided a lean figure, with a broad straw hat and a suit of yellowish jean—Elder Hiram Rutherford.

“I’ve no humour to talk much to-night, mister; I’m best by myself, jest now,” said Joe, roughly. The elder laughed a little hoarse laugh, with malice and craft in the ring of it, but his voice was not unkindly toned as he said,

“Silly boy, don’t you go blockin’ your own light. You jest listen to me, on’y five minutes, and then cut up rough and shirk my company, if ye like.”

Without awaiting a reply, the shrewd old man caught Joe by the arm, and walked by his side, talking fast but low, with upraised forefinger, but evidently with earnest emphasis quite foreign to his usual sneering manner. Even had I been disposed to turn eavesdropper, not a word could I have caught. I got quietly up from my resting-place, and limped home.

Miss Esther was vexed that evening, for Joe was late, and the tea grew black and

bitter, the cakes cold, and the spruce beer flat, with long waiting. But when her nephew did return, he wore a strangely flushed and excited aspect, and there was a glow on his cheek, and an elasticity in his step. And yet, though evidently in high spirits, there was something odd about Joe. He avoided meeting my gaze, or his aunt's gaze, whenever he could. He shuffled about, turning his shoulder on the company. He ate and drank and laughed in a boisterous way, but as if his thoughts were busy elsewhere.

That night, Joe's chamber being next to mine, I could have sworn I heard his window stealthily opened an hour after midnight, and a dull sound as of a big man squeezing himself through a casement almost too narrow to give him egress. Then followed the cautious tread of a heavy foot on the garden paths. Though why Joe, as master of the house and of himself, should choose to slip out like a truant schoolboy was beyond my comprehension. Next night the same sound was audible at the same hour. Nay more, I looked from

my little window, and caught the gleam of a dark lantern in the garden, passing rapidly on.

But the morning after, a surprise occurred which put these nocturnal sights and sounds out of my head.

A new flowing well of oil had been discovered, and, wonder of wonders, it was not only on Joe's land, but it had burst forth from the very excavation he had caused to be made! A cowboy passing with his herd along the lane had first seen the jet and heard the splash of the spouting petroleum, and the news had spread like wildfire over the village.


Before breakfast nine-tenths of the people of Sparta, men, women, and children, had gathered in a ring to gaze, open-mouthed and open-eyed, at the portent. There was no mistake about the matter. The tawny liquid, like thick dirty water, leaping up in a thick pillar of fluid, and arching over as it poured its spray into a little pool of oil, was genuine petroleum, and the quantity was considerable. Fortune had knocked at my

host's door while he slept, or at any rate while he was supposed to sleep.

Bating a little not unnatural envy, the impulse of the neighbours was to be sincerely glad. Next to having such an outcrop of luck within his own bounds, every man present would have selected Joe as the best recipient for such a boon. In elder times and elder countries, the windfall might have been assigned to the bounty of the fairies; but, as it was, more than one man, and many women, loudly declared the appearance of the oil a "dispensatory" in Joe's favour.

"What will Deacon Boone say to 't?" was the general cry.

Meanwhile I was standing among the rest, sorely puzzled. My professional knowledge made me suspect that some subterranean flow of the petroleum had taken place, and that in all probability Elder Rutherford's well would be a loser by as much as Joe's gained. But, beyond the fence of partition, I could see the elder's well, flowing, to all appearance, as lustily as ever; and beside me stood the



elder himself, with no sign of apprehension on his thin face, or visible in the twinkle of his piercing eyes. Indeed, Mr. Rutherford wore an odd look of stealthy satisfaction, and he was not the least loud in his congratulations of Joe.

"Very strange," thought I. "That old man must have a better heart than I gave him credit for. But the outbreak of this oil is one of those apparent caprices of nature which perplex men of science."

The last sentence had been uttered aloud, and the aged well-digger at my elbow answered it with:

"Solemn true, mister. We dug, and bored, and no signs of ile, and here it comes up, plenty as peaches in the latter end o' July. But here comes Deacon Boone, struck all of a heap like, at sight of the ile on the ground of the chap he choked off from coortin' his darter. May I never, but he's gwine to eat humble pie!"


Eat humble pie the deacon certainly did, for, after hovering about the oil like a moth round a candle, after listening to the by-

standers' vague calculations as to how many hundred or thousand gallons a day the well would yield, Mr. Boone went up to Joe and held out his hand.

"Give you joy, my boy!" he said in a tremulous way, and, taking courage from Joe's hearty hand grasp, actually made a stammering apology for his late conduct, and more than hinted that his desire was that Susan and Joe should "come together."

It was curious to see the vain mean man wriggling out of the dilemma, to hear his clumsy phrases, and to observe his coarse greed and time-serving nature. Such things have been done before, in the politest circles, but here the mercenary character stood out transparent and stripped of artificial adornments. Joe seemed to feel the truth, as he made answer in a voice that was audible to many of those present :


"Deacon, we'll let bygones be bygones. I'm willin' to stick to our old 'greement, and I'll be proud of Susan for my wife, but I want nouthin' more. Keep your money and your settlements and stuff, or light your pipe



with 'em if you like. I take your darter in the clothes she stands in, and no property—not a cent.”

All the villagers were talking for the next three days of Joe's amazing luck, and Joe's no less amazing disinterestedness. It was known that the deacon, who had but one son and no other daughter, would have given Susan a large sum on her wedding-day, and would have prospectively settled a much larger sum upon her. And however productive Joe's well might be, a good balance at the bank was never a hindrance in business.

Some oil was collected at the new petroleum spring in the course of the next four days, but not as much as if the proprietor had not been absorbed in preparations for his wedding. That wedding was duly solemnised, with the full sanction of parents, minister, and magistrate; and a very pretty dark-eyed bride Susan was, and very lovingly she nestled by Joe's side. Hers was a soft nature, but she had found a strong prop to cling to. I was present at the wedding, and found much amusement in the spectacle of the feast and




frolic, which wound up with an uproarious dance.

Deacon Boone publicly offered Joe a roll of notes, Susan's portion, which Joe as publicly declined.

Two days afterwards I was to leave Sparta. My sturdy host would, I knew, have been pained by the proffer of pecuniary compensation for my maintenance, but he did not refuse to accept a good German rifle, neatly mounted in silver, which formed part of my worldly goods, and which I had sent for from Philadelphia. This Joe promised to keep for my sake, and in memory of the eventful time we had passed together.

On the day of my departure a new excitement pervaded the village. Joe's flowing well had ceased to flow. The oil spring had vanished as abruptly as it had appeared. Before long a great crowd gathered, cries of wonder and condolence were heard, and Deacon Boone and his wife arrived in a state bordering on distraction. Joe alone seemed cool, though a little sheepish. In answer to the deacon's voluble inquiries, he referred him





to Elder Rutherford. The deacon faced his enemy.

“What do you know about it, mister?”

“Know?” said Elder Hiram; “you’ve come to the right shop for knowledge. The well’s dry; and why? Why, because the lease was for a week, and it’s out to-day.”

And so it turned out. Elder Hiram’s malicious wish to play the deacon a trick, had suggested an expedient at which Joe, in his despair, had caught. A few yards of two-inch piping laid down under cover of night between the Wyandot Creek well and Joe’s excavation, had sufficed to extemporise a flowing well on the latter’s property, while it merely relieved the elder’s petroleum spring of its superfluity. The pipe had now been removed.

Of course Susan’s parents were very full of wrath and reproaches, but they were at last overborne by public opinion. The majority favoured Joe, probably considering all stratagems fair in love and war, while Susan took her husband’s part, and the young farmer’s remark was unanswerable:

“Deacon, I ain’t ashamed. It’s fust time I ever deceived anybody, but ’twar for Susan’s sake, and I never took a dollar of your money, nor never will. Remember that !”

So the young folks moved West, and were thriving in Kansas when last I heard of them. Miss Esther was still with them.

## THE GREEN LIGHT.

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“ I CANNOT say much in favour of the place, but such as it is, it is heartily at your service.” So saying, the secretary shook me cordially by the hand, jerked out his watch, and after a hasty glance at it, pleaded an engagement, and went out. A clerk was left behind to fill up my appointment, ready for the signature of the governor of North Carolina. The latter young gentleman, one of those long-haired youths whom New England sends to all subordinate posts in the South, had a most comical expression on his shrewd face. He rolled his eyes over the document, pinched up his thin lips into an expressive leer, and at last exploded into a titter. I was not offended. I knew the Americans, espe-

cially the Northerners, too well to expect at their hands the same demur politeness which would have been rendered by a European official. And I knew, too, that Yankees seldom laugh without a cause, and that their opinions are commonly worth listening to.

"You seem amused," said I. "Pray tell me whether at my desire to obtain the situation, or at my succeeding in my endeavours?"

The clerk laid down his pen, turned his twinkling eyes full on me, and answered :

"The reason I larfed mister, was jest this : you folks from the old country do the queerest things, right out, you do. We native-born Americans, we are that plastic and spry, we can tackle to most ; and this child has drove niggers, kept books aboard a Ohio steamer, preached to a congregation in Wisconsin, and sold notions to Canada. But what you won't catch a New Englander doing, in one while, is bein' keeper of the Cape Hatteras lighthouse."

"Why so?" I asked, good-humouredly. "The situation is, no doubt, a little dull, and the salary is not high——"

"Six hundred and twenty-five dollars, fifty cents, and a liberal allowance for wood and oil; not so bad, nouthar, for light employ," parenthetically remarked the clerk.

"But still," I went on, "there are advantages in the situation. It is not an unhealthy spot, it is cheap and quiet, and as for temptation to expense——"

"As for them, mister, Robinson Crusoe was a Broadway lounge, compared with what you'll be. Snakes! why, a 'possum up a tulip-tree is in the world, when you come to reckon him with the keeper of that lighthouse. Since I've been here, eleven months or there away, there's been three fresh keepers appointed. One cut his throat. He was a German: one died of delirium tremendous; and the third, an Irish fellow, was drowned, or drowned himself. To hear the secretary palavering you as he did, about naturalisation, and that—when we should have to get a self-acting light, I guess, if we couldn't hire a foreigner to kindle it."

I will own that these remarks of the young clerk's gave me more than one melancholy hour,

and made me almost doubt whether my own acceptance of so ill-starred and lonely a post were a wise one. But an old English adage declares that a certain class of persons must not be choosers, and my purse was lank enough to place me in the unlucky category. I had come out to America with high hopes, and those hopes had been lamentably baffled. The fortune I was to have made with brush and with the end of a burnt stick. The floors were of rough planks, stained in many places with palette, and the fame even sweeter than fortune, had flitted before me like a mocking will-o'-the-wisp. I was actually poorer than when I arrived, two years before, at New York. Of my own proficiency as an artist, it behoves me to speak modestly. My studies had been long and sincere, and critics of some celebrity had predicted my future success. My true course was to have stayed at home, to have stuck to my art steadily, and, by patient work and thought, to have attained, not to a pinnacle of renown, but to a reasonable share of public favour.

I did not do this. I preferred to grow rich

and famous at a bound, and I emigrated to America in a flush of hope. I could not have done a sillier thing. The New World is very chary of yielding patronage to any foreign talent that has not been heralded by the trumpet-note of foreign praise. The United States combine to do honour to the artist, actor, or singer, who can boast a great name in Europe, but the unknown are sure to be looked coldly upon. So it fared with me. And this was why, after setting up as a portrait painter in Philadelphia, as a historical painter in Boston, as a painter of allegory in Cincinnati, I was finally reduced to solicit the post of lighthouse-keeper in a wretched sandy islet off the coast of North Carolina.

I had one especial reason for asking and accepting this unpromising berth: a reason with which I did not trouble the clerk, and which I had not even imparted to the secretary. If I had any peculiar inclination, it was towards the painting of sea-views and ships; but as yet I had been dissatisfied with the result of my efforts. The colour was so poor—in my eyes at least—and the treatment so conven-

tional. I had often longed for a favourable opportunity of sitting down before the ocean, studying every wrinkle and line in Neptune's stormy face, and taking the portrait of the sea in every mood from calm to frenzy. Here was a capital chance. The keeper of a lighthouse would be alone with Nature; no billiards, no gossip, nothing to call off his attention; and, perhaps after a summer's study, I might contrive to produce something that would sell well in London. Longer than half a year or so, I never dreamed of retaining the employment. Indeed it is not customary in the States to stick very long to one avocation, or to one office. Americans commonly regard one preferment as a stepping-stone to something very different, and I, in my turn, hoped to save enough and learn enough to enable me to withdraw to England again, with a fair prospect of success.

One fortnight afterwards, I hired a boat, and was duly wafted across to my new residence. It had been settled that I was to receive rations, at regular intervals. Two barrels of pickled-pork, with a cask of flour,



some bags of biscuit and corn, a keg of whisky and some groceries, were on board the boat. With me went, also, a sturdy black lad whose goggle eyes rolled in wonder at the unaccustomed sight he beheld, and a hale old negress, the grandmother of the boy, a woman with an excellent character for cooking and scouring. These coloured persons were slaves. White servants are luxuries undreamed of in the labour-despising South, and I had conformed to the prevailing custom in hiring the living chattels of a landowner in the neighbourhood of Wilmington. I had been recommended to this gentleman, Dr. Leonidas Wicks, by a friend who knew that the doctor owned several negroes whose work on the land, or in the house, could be easily dispensed with. An Englishman never feels his conscience more troublesome than when he meddles with the "domestic institution" of the Slave States, even in the indirect method of hiring "animated property" from its possessor. Very likely Dr. Wicks read some such feeling in my countenance, for he said abruptly, before our bargain was concluded, "You've no call, Mr. Britisher,

to be so plaguy nice! I expect Aunt Polly and young Juba had sooner go along with you to the lighthouse, than be sold to go South. It's a nation deal pleasanter work to cook meals and shake blankets, than hoe rice and sugar-grounds, down in Georgia or South Carolina, and it's there I'd have been obliged to send that pair of woolly heads, if you hadn't happened in to hire 'em." My scruples were thus removed, and I found Aunt Polly a good cook, and Juba a well-disposed lad, though neither was industrious nor quick of comprehension.

There was a light breeze, and, as the boat's sails filled pleasantly, we flew along at a great rate through the little sparkling waves. The whole bay, fenced in from angry gales and Atlantic rollers by the natural breakwater of the sandy islands, reminded me of the lagoons of Venice, and the blazing blue sky overhead was thoroughly Italian. It was amusing to hear the voluble talk and loud exclamations of my sable attendants, who had never before had more than a distant peep at the sea, and to whom everything was an object of wonder.

"Hoo! what sort ob grass dat?" cried Juba,

for instance, when a great heap of tangled seaweed—red, brown, and purple, and full of shells and small crabs—floated by.

“Him not grass. Him flower, tupidhead !” returned Aunt Polly, with all the complacency of superior wisdom.

Presently we got to the little quay, whose slimy and weather-beaten piles were deeply imbedded in the sand, and above which rose the gaunt white tower of the lighthouse. Some former occupant of the latter had made a desperate attempt at cultivation, and some traces of a garden were still visible, though the very wall had been more than half buried by the pure white sand that had drifted before the wind. The whole place was in tolerable repair, but had a neglected and dismal appearance. Nor did the interior of the building present a more cheerful aspect. The walls were worm-eaten bulwarks of timber, like the bulkheads of an old ship; the low ceilings were scored all over with names and dates, with ill-spelt scraps of songs and frightful caricatures that had been sketched in ink, paint, and pitch; and more than one charred


spot indicated that some of my predecessors had been careless in their habits, and that an incipient fire had been trampled out just in time to avert a conflagration. There was no furniture worth mentioning, except some broken chairs and tables, an oaken press, and a barrack bedstead of iron.

But there was plenty of wood piled under cover; there was oil in abundance; there were three telescopes with the government mark upon them, and, on the wall of the principal apartment, hung a long duck-gun, surmounting a pair of naval cutlasses, whose brass hilts were green as verdigris with the tarnish of the moist sea air. I had been warned that I must bring everything I wanted with me, and the boat was pretty well stored with provisions, cooking utensils, mattresses, blankets, and so forth. In carrying up these matters from the little half-decked vessel I had engaged, I and my black allies were assisted by the boatmen. The latter, who consisted of a fine old patriarch in striped shirt and a suit of homespun, his son, and a strapping young

mulatto, waited awhile to drink my health in a horn of whisky.

“You do look a little more shipshape, now, Britisher,” remarked the old man, as he surveyed the mattresses and clean Pennsylvania blankets which now reposed on the rusty iron bed; “but you’ll find the place a thought lonesome or so to a city-bred chap. There’s neighbours, sure enough; but, stranger (here the fisherman dropped his voice), I advise ye to be careful as a b’ar on hot iron, till you’ve larned the length of their foot.”

“How do you mean?” I asked with a puzzled look. But the old man was not disposed to be explicit; he only muttered that a nod was as good as a wink to a blind horse, and presently took his departure. The negress, who had a real taste for work and bustling not very usual in one of her colour, was singing as she arranged matters in the kitchen, and Juba was slowly carrying in logs from the woodpile, with a very unnecessary amount of hard breathing and frequent pauses for rest. Having taken a glance at the lantern, and filled the lamps with oil, I walked




out at the half-open door, and sauntered to the beach. The prospect was a wide one, but monotonous. Sea and sand, sea and sand—as far as the eye could range, from north to south, from east to west, nothing but sea and sand. The dazzling azure of the one was only varied by the pure white of the other. On the beach itself were a number of bright coloured shells, and some heaps of gaily tinted weed. There were crabs, too, in quantities, and a salt water tortoise (or mud turtle) went flopping down into the depths of a little creek, as I approached. I looked along the coast-line, as it trended sharply away. The sand-hills were heaped up, with hollows scooped out between them, in a swelling irregular line, as the wild wind had piled them during the hurricane months. Vegetation was scanty and coarse; a few hardy plants and grasses, of a dusky green hue, clung desperately to the hummocks of sandy soil, and there were one or two specimens of the cotton shrub growing wild: the seeds having probably been blown by some gale across the landlocked sea that severed us from the mainland. The aquatic

birds were strangely tame; they flew screaming around me in a manner that reminded me of Alexander Selkirk and his dreary lordship over "the fowl and the brute" more vividly than was pleasant. I looked long and hard, but could make out no signs of human habitation within my range of vision. A few white sails were visible on the far-away blue of the horizon: the very presence of those ships seemed a comfort to me, as a link between my lonely self and the great stirring world of healthy movement and bustle. I began to doubt whether I had done wisely in accepting the situation.

"Hulloa, chap! Air yew the new light-house-keeper?" hailed a deep voice among the sandhills.

I wheeled round. Behind me, on the summit of a mound, stood a very tall swarthy young man, in a checked frock of Osnaburg cloth, sea-boots, and a battered straw hat. He had a gun in his hand, and a game pouch by his side, which was nearly full of recently shot birds of the sand-piper class. A red handkerchief was knotted loosely around the

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fellow's sunburnt neck, and he was altogether dressed in a careless, picturesque fashion that gave him the wild aspect of a brigand.

"Hulloh! Can't yew answer?" thundered the deep voice.

I replied that I was the lighthouse-keeper; had but just arrived from the mainland, and was very much at his service.

"Then I guess we're neighbours?" said the sportsman, as he advanced and extended me the hand of friendship. A brown big knuckly hand it was, and the squeeze that I received brought tears into my eyes. After this salutation, the islander leaned on the stock of his piece and scanned me from head to foot, and back again, very slowly and deliberately. "I heerd there war to be a new keeper," observed the giant, "and my father, old Daddy Brown, of Fruit Creek—my name's Japhet Brown, stranger, at your call—Daddy Brown said, if I tumbled across you, and liked the looks of you—why, I were to say there's dinner and liquor at your bidding, any day you stroll Fruit Creek way."

After growling out this hospitable message,



Japhet Brown stared again, as if to make quite sure that he really did like the looks of me. For myself, I felt an inward conviction that I did not much admire the looks of my new acquaintance. I did not, somehow, fancy the man. It was not that he was rough and uncouth, that his shaggy black hair hung like layers of sable fringe under the torn rim of his straw hat, or that his clothes were daubed with tar and fish scales. I had seen sterling good fellows in still ruder guise, and had knocked about the world too long, to despise the toil-hardened hand-grasp of an honest man. But Japhet's face expressed, at the best, but a ferocious good humour; the features were heavy and lowering, the black eyes were restless and cunning, and the half-careless smile on the mouth had something sinister mingling with its effrontery. I did not like the man, but I took good care to show no coldness or aversion. The keeper of the Hatteras lighthouse, I knew, could not afford to be exclusive or dainty in his choice of friends. I remembered the warning hint of the old boatman, and resolved that I would be on

good terms with my neighbours, if possible. So I took Japhet Brown into my dwelling, opened my little store of cordials, and regaled him with a glass of gin sling and a prime cigar: luxuries which he appreciated the more because of their contrast to drams of raw spirit and coarse tobacco. The young man was less inquisitive than a Yankee would have been, but was rather contemptuous and overbearing in manner; having an evident scorn for the natives of a city.

"You'll be skeared here, all by yourself, chap, won't you?" he asked, with half jeering interest in my forlorn condition. "At Red Bay, now, there's folks a many, and at Fruit Creek there's daddy, and my mother, and granny, let alone six of us boys and gals, while there's neighbours handy. But here! I wonder a town-bred coon, like you, should take the berth. Can yew wrestle?"

"I used to wrestle a bit in bygone times," I answered with a smile; "I was fond of active amusements as a boy."

"Can you shoot?" demanded Mr. Japhet Brown.

On my replying that I could, he put his long-barrelled fowling-piece into my hands, saying, "Try your luck, stranger. You see that 'ere bird, jest perched on the lump of red weed, floatin' out at sea. Let's see if you can hit her."

To Japhet's amazement, however, instead of pulling the trigger at once, I waited till the gull rose on her white wings, and then fired. The bird heeled over, and fell with a splash, stone dead, into the sea.

"Whoop! you air a good 'un, chap! the best Yankee I ever clapped eyes on! Shake hands! I'll tell Daddy Brown about that—forty-five yards clean, and no lie about it!" And Japhet gave my hand a congratulatory squeeze that I felt for an hour after; so great was his delight at my skill. To shoot flying is in America a much more rare accomplishment than in England. The best marksmen of the States pique themselves on their accuracy with the rifle, whether at a dead mark or a deer or a squirrel, but with the fowling-piece they are less expert. I had won Japhet's esteem, for the time at least, and it was with

unfeigned heartiness that he clapped me on the shoulder at parting, and renewed his invitation.

“Come when yew please, chap. There’s always lots of pork and bacon; whisky’s plenty, too, and if yew happen in at dinner time on Sabbath, yew’ll be welcome. My mother she can fix a chicken, and roast a chicken, as well as any cook in Raleigh city. The gals—them’s my sisters—air right down merry ones, and a chat with them would do yew good, stranger, when you get the lonesomes upon you.” So saying, Japhet turned on his heel, and strode off towards Fruit Creek again.

Nothing worth mention occurred during the remainder of the afternoon. When dusk came creeping over the low shores, and a deepening shadow turned the shining azure of the sea first to the glossy purple of a starling’s breast, then to violet, I went up the ladder to light my beacon for the first time. It was not without a certain amount of nervous tremor that I trimmed the wicks, adjusted the reflectors, and applied the match.

I read over my printed instructions once again, before I executed my task. I held my breath, and hesitated before I kindled the lamps. For the first time, the great importance of my duties flashed upon me. I was about to ignite a beacon to whose distant radiance the eyes of the storm-tossed mariner, in the direst extremity of his battle with the elements, might turn for guidance and direction. What mischief might not be caused by negligence, however arising, and what a post of trust was mine, after all, as a sentinel in front of the devouring sea, watchful for human lives!

Flash! the bright glow brought forth, far to the north. I saw the distant glimmer over-swelling mounds of sand and the darkling surges. A white light! That must be at Albemarle Sound. They were posting sentries, then—the sentries against wreck and calamity. It was my turn to answer the signal. So I lighted up my two lamps. A red light and a green. They had not twinkled for more than five minutes before I saw something like a blood-red star over the waves to

the southward. A red light. The light on Cape Look-out. I remained for some time in the glazed apartment which forms the upper story of all lighthouses, gazing out into the night, and listening to the moan of the wind. I did not feel so lonely, somehow, while looking towards those distant gleams, north and south, which told of a common purpose, and good-will towards our race.

“What time, sar, massa like to hab him supper? Got such a bootiful chicken, sar, ready to broil if massa give command. And shall old Aunt Polly boil kettle for tea?”

It was my black housekeeper, eager to be employed, recalled me from æsthetic meditations, and I left the steady lamps to burn alone.

My every-day life, as custodian of the Hatteras Light, was an exceedingly monotonous one. Yet dull as it was, it could not be called intolerable. It is true that there were times when I heartily envied Aunt Polly singing among her saucepans, and Juba carolling some interminable negro ditty as he chopped wood or cleaned my boots; but at other pe-

riods I was more at ease. Sometimes a boat touched at my little quay, and I had the pleasure of an hour's gossip with the hardy sailors it contained: a conversation in which fish was oddly mixed up with politics, but which was never devoid of interest.

My own official work was light. I can well imagine that to an uneducated man the lack of continued occupation would have been maddening. After all, to burnish a brace of reflectors, and to trim, fill, and kindle two lamps, made but scanty inroads on my time. The duty required steadiness, sobriety, and punctuality; but not industry. Luckily for me, I had my art wherewith to while away the long hours of the sultry summer days; I painted and sketched; I retouched and altered; and, by dint of gazing on nature with a loving and humble eye, I really made some progress as a marine painter. I had fully made up my mind not to retain my post above a year at the outside; nor would I have thought of staying so long but that I wanted to learn to depict the sea, after the long period of sunshine and smiles, with a wrathful frown

upon its expanse. A man cannot always be painting, but I had much ado to find any other tolerably rational pastime. I polished the mountings of the telescopes, and even the brass hilts of the old cutlasses, till they shone like gold. I cleaned up the old duck gun, and got it ready for the arrival of the birds of passage, when the northern snows should fall. And, finding that I could not, from the quay or beach, contrive to catch any but the smallest fish, I seriously set to work to repair a large old boat belonging to the lighthouse, and which I found half-sunk in a creek not far off. Lucky it was that I betook myself to this last task, as the reader shall presently hear.

All this time I saw but little of my neighbours, the islanders. Curiosity brought me several visitors during the first months of my sojourn ; but, although I made a point of receiving their calls as urbanely as possible, no particular sympathy could exist between them and myself. It was not that they were rude of speech and boisterous of manners ; nor was it that I found myself the only educated per-



son within walking distance. But my amphibious neighbours had in their demeanour, for the most part, something that repelled esteem and discouraged confidence. They seemed sly, with all their uncouthness, and they would now and then give utterance to sentiments too lawless for my taste.

I shall never forget the first visit I paid to the Brown family. Fruit Creek was a long and deep, though narrow inlet, which terminated in a shelving bank, on the smooth sand of which a number of whale-boats and skiffs rested, like fish out of water. The creek was named in consequence of the wreck of a West Indian vessel, laden with pines and shaddocks, near the spot where Daddy Brown had established his long black house of well-calked timber. There were several huts within sight, but Mr. Brown's was by far the best and largest of the tenements; its windows were completely glazed, and it possessed a tolerable garden, fenced from spray and sand by a high wall of solid timber slabs. The inside of the house was even more comfortable than the exterior promised. The Browns were evi-

dently well off, and, as they insisted that I should not leave them before supper, I had an opportunity of seeing how they fared in general.

Daddy Brown himself was a hale old fellow, tall, but much bowed with age, though his flashing black eyes were as keen as a hawk's, and evinced great craft and vigour. I was at first rather disposed to like the old man, he talked so well and glibly. He alone, of the family group, had been a traveller; he had been to China and to Europe, as mate of a vessel, and had coasted repeatedly along the Atlantic seaboard, from Vera Cruz to Halifax. There were three sons, of whom Japhet was the eldest, and three daughters, all tall and well made, with dark complexions and bright eyes. Mrs. Brown, on the other hand, was a soft little woman, with rather a timid look in her round blue eyes, and was, as her husband said, from Pennsylvania. She was a notable housekeeper, and had the northern taste for scrubbing and polishing, since the floor was exquisitely clean, and the copper and tin upon the kitchen shelves shone brilliantly. The

family received me hospitably enough. The young men eyed my thews and sinews with undisguised scorn, and half-jestingly challenged me to "wrestle a fall" with Seth or 'Symmachus, observing that Japhet was too big to make the match a fair one. But they were equally anxious to see some proof of my proficiency with the gun, concerning which they had heard marvels from their elder brother. So, a fowling-piece was taken down from the hooks over the stove, where it usually hung, and half an hour was devoted to shooting at a moving mark, such as Seth's cap, or an old sea-boot belonging to Japhet, which were successively flung up into the air, and riddled with swan shot, amid general applause.

"Too dark for more! too dark for more!" cried old Daddy Brown; "wall done, Britisher, all the same! I could shoot a bit onces, but 'twar with the rifle. Come to supper, boys and gals. The old woman's just lit up."

The lamps which Mrs. Brown had just "lit up," were three very large constructions of white metal, the work of some Yankee pewterer, which held a great deal of oil, and gave

a blaze of yellow light. The cloth was laid on the walnut-wood table, and on it smoked a profusion of hot viands, flanked by all sorts of bottles and stone jars. The plates were of common delf, but the drinking vessels were most various. Thus, Daddy Brown had a silver tankard; Japhet, a tin pannikin; the girls glasses; and the rest of the party china mugs. I was still more surprised to see that some of the forks were of massive silver, while others were two-pronged steel implements of the cheapest fabric. We had scarcely sat down, before a remarkable incident happened. I chanced, less through inquisitiveness than absence of mind, to be turning round the heavy silver fork assigned to me, when I descried some half-effaced armorial bearings on the handle. Before I could decipher them, however, Seth Brown, the youngest son, who sat near me, and who had watched me, suddenly thrust out his bony hand, wrested the fork from me, and tossed it across the table: growling out something about "a spy." I was really too much astonished to resent this rudeness, but Daddy

Brown instantly exclaimed in a harsh tone, "For shame, Seth! you're drunk, boy. Ask the stranger's pardon, or——" Daddy Brown did not finish the sentence, but his brows corrugated into an ugly frown, and he shook his fist at his youngest son, who gave me back the fork with a very bad grace, muttering that he meant no harm—" 'twas a joke." This was odd, and another trivial circumstance happened soon after. One of the girls who sat near me, a merry black-haired maiden, like her sisters, with a loud laugh and a nut-brown cheek, wore a very pretty brooch, mounted in gold, and delicately executed in enamel, in Louis Quinze style. I happened to praise the beauty of this costly ornament, to the evident gratification of the wearer, until I hazarded the remark that "the workmanship was probably French. I never saw such a brooch in an American jeweller's."

"That's tellins!" answered the girl in a sharp tone.

"Phœbe!" exclaimed her mother in a deprecatory fashion. Her father gave one of his oily laughs. "Our island gals," said he,

“don’t understand your town ways, Britisher. The gewgaw glittery thing was honestly come by, you may take your oath of it. And that’s all that matters the vally of a pinch of gunpowder, whether French or not French.”

I parted from the Browns cordially enough, but the more I thought of them the queerer they seemed. Were they really fishermen, I wondered, in spite of all the nets and many hooked lines ostentatiously displayed around their dwelling! Had those sharp whale-boats no other use than to carry Japhet and Seth to the banks where coalfish, and catfish, jewfish, and sunfish, were plenty? There were things to be seen in that house of Mr. Brown’s, which contrasted forcibly with the oaken benches and clumsy furniture. Silk curtains to the small paned-windows, one or two arm-chairs of frayed velvet, a beautiful Indian cabinet in rare wood inlaid with ivory, and above all, a small but handsome mirror, whose richly carved and gilded frame jarred with the coarse coloured prints that were hung on the same wall. Very odd, all this. To be sure, these expensive objects might be

relics of Mr. Brown's seafaring days, treasures picked up in the course of his wanderings. And yet—I doubted.

About a week after, something confirmed my doubts. An officer arrived suddenly—a lieutenant in the United States navy—who had been charged with the duty of inspecting all the lighthouses on the Atlantic coast. He found nothing to blame at Cape Hatteras.

“Your lamps and lantern are in pattern order, Mr. Halford,” said the lieutenant, very good-humouredly, “and your reflectors do you credit. I wish I had always the power to say as much; but the fact is, Uucle Sam has some shocking bargains along the coast. No accident here, in your time, hey?”

“Accident?” said I, rather perplexed.

“Ah, yes, it's best to call them by that name;” said the lieutenant dryly: “they are rather famous for their frequency hereabouts, especially in rough or foggy weather. Ships often mistake the lights and run ashore, and are lost—and no wonder, if people will fasten lanterns to horses, and keep moving along the beach, so as to delude poor wretches at sea. I


see, Mr. Halford, by your face, that you are surprised. Briefly, then, there are gangs of as rascally wreckers, not a hundred miles off, as ever a country was cursed with. Take care they don't play you a trick some night, that's all."

But nothing whatever occurred, during the long hot summer, to justify the lieutenant's warning. Autumn came, and with it the season of violent gales, heavy rains, and fogs of blinding thickness. I heard rumours of a few wrecks, on remote parts of the chain of sandy islets, but no such misfortune occurred in my own neighbourhood. Day after day I saw ships pass safely by, under shortened canvass, and fighting their way bravely through the angry sea. Night after night my beacon lights answered the friendly blaze to north and south, and along the wave-lashed coastline the signs of danger were shown, not in vain. By this time I was getting heartily sick of my employment. I had saved a little money. I had made many sketches, and had much improved in my colouring and taste, by dint of study and practice. And as I found



my isolation tedious to the last degree, I had written to the authorities to inform them of my intention to resign, as soon as my successor should be ready to assume my duties.

On a blustering and dark autumnal day, when the clouds were driving fast across the threatening sky, and the waves rolled in with a hoarse murmur, I suddenly came, in the course of a lonely ramble along the beach, upon two men. They were standing in a little hollow between two hillocks of loose sand, gazing out earnestly to seaward. My eyes instinctively followed the direction of theirs, and I saw a large ship under double reefed topsails, with her courses brailed up, staggering along the coast line, with her bows turned southwards. The wind was unfavourable to her, and she had much ado to make very slow progress indeed, by dint of incessant tacks. The two men on the shore, not noticing me, as my footsteps fell noiselessly on the soft sand, conversed in loud, unguarded tones. "There she goes on the larboard tack again. At that rate she'll beat about till dark, and



never make ten cables' length of way ;" said the younger and taller of the two.

"She can't fetch Ocracock Inlet, with the wind where it is, and like to freshen ;" observed the other, in an oily, insinuating voice which I recognised as that of Daddy Brown ; "I guess her skipper don't know this coast. The fool's sure to bump ashore, soon or late."

"A good job if she came ashore within our bounds !" exclaimed the younger, who was no other than Japhet Brown ; "deep laden as she is ; there'd be pickings worth a wet-jacket. We haven't had a clutch at such a critter, not since the ——"

"Hush !" prudently observed old Brown, who had just turned his head, and caught a glimpse of me ; "hush ! there's ears about."

Japhet reddened and frowned very sulkily as I descended the sandhill and wished him and his father "good-day." But Mr. Brown was very bland. "Glad to tumble on you again, Britisher ! Han't see you these two months agone. Dirty weather !"

Our conversation was not a long one, and we soon parted. But, to my great surprise,



when I got near home I heard some one panting after me, and up came Japhet at a run. "Father says," he gasped out, "says yew would do him proud if yew'd look in at Fruit Creek to-night. The gals have got a party—a frolic to shell corn-cobs and string 'em—and there's lots of neighbours comin', both men and women. We have a dance and games, and a supper fit for the President. Will you come?"

Now if I had consulted my own inclinations, I should have declined, but I was anxious to give no offence, and I knew that my refusal would probably be attributed to the pride of superior station and acquirements, so I accepted.

"That's right, chap!" said Japhet, drawing a long breath: "I hate a fellow to be nasty proud, I do. Ah, yew and we might work well together, and yew'd make a better thing of it than the State salary, if yew only knew which side your bread was buttered."

"What do you mean?"


But Japhet turned on his heel with a hoarse laugh, saying in a loud voice,

“Never yew mind; recklect you’ve promised to come. Folks gather at six. Don’t be later nor the half-past, chap!”

Off he went. I went home, and, as I turned my head in the act of crossing the threshold, I saw the same ship still within a mile of the shore. The dusk was deepening fast into the obscurity of night, but I could see that she was making slow progress, while there was every indication of a storm. I went up the ladder, lighted and arranged my lamps with my accustomed care, and then sat down to read for awhile. At half-past five, I made such slight alterations in my dress as were necessary, threw my mackintosh cloak over my shoulders, and after a glance at the beacon, prepared to set out. I had never before left the lamps to burn in my absence.

I had a long and disagreeable walk to Fruit Creek; the wind had begun to moan and shriek, my cloak flew out and tugged at my shoulders as if to hold me back, and my feet stumbled among the sand-hills. It was very dark, and rain and sleet came driving before the gale. After my weary tramp along the desolate

shore, I thought that Daddy Brown's house, with a ruddy radiance streaming from its windows, and its principal apartment crowded with men, matrons, girls, and striplings, presented a cheerful scene. There was abundance of fun, laughter, and hearty mirth at this "frolic." An endless country dance was achieved by a score of couples, with an obligato accompaniment of stamping and clapping of hands; songs were sung, games, such as hunt the slipper and blind-man's-buff, were played. At another time I should have watched the scene with keen interest; but on this particular evening my spirits were low, and my heart was heavy within me. Something like a foreboding weighed me down, in spite of all my efforts not to play the part of kill-joy. Daddy Brown seemed very glad to see me, and so did Japhet, but it struck me that Mrs. Brown looked at me with rather a scared glance. Curiously enough, though the three daughters were all dancing as vigorously as if life itself depended on their exertions, Seth and 'Symmachus, the younger sons, were absent.



"The boys are all right," said Daddy Brown, in answer to my inquiry; "they're out late; been over to the main, after ducks. We'll see 'em before supper time, Britisher."

I declined dancing, and for some time contented myself with the part of a spectator. But the fiddling, laughter, and loud talking, jarred on my ears; I became more and more oppressed by the gloom that had clouded my mind, why, I knew not; and at last I could bear it no longer. Watching my opportunity, I slipped out unobserved, and set out on my lonely homeward walk.

About half way from the lighthouse, two men, with their heads depressed, as they pushed their way against the wind and rain, came hurrying rapidly past, and crossed me without seeing me. They were of much the height and build of Seth Brown and his brother; but what errand could possibly have taken them to the Cape, when their father had accounted so plausibly for their absence?

A vague formless misgiving came to chill my heart with dread. What errand could

have led those two young men to my desolate dwelling on a night of revelry? I set my teeth and strode on faster. Was that lightning, that red flash through the darkness to seaward? No. After a pause came the sullen boom of a cannon. A signal of distress, no doubt, from some ship in peril. I pressed on. At last I could see the lighthouse, sending, as usual, its friendly beams of radiance far over the roaring sea. As usual? No, for my practised eye soon detected a change. The red light burnt alone; the green lamp was *gone*!

“Great Heaven!” I cried, aloud, “this is some dreadful accident, or else villains have been tampering with the lights! Those young ruffians—the ship—the invitation—I see it!” With a groan I set off to run at my utmost speed, hoping to arrive in time to light the extinguished lamp before the doomed ship, whose signal I had heard, should be lured to her fate. For, at a glance, I had divined the heartless scheme of the wreckers. The red light burning alone would be taken for that on Cape Look-out, and the captain,

utterly deceived, would seek an imaginary channel where the fatal sandbanks lay.

Before I got home, however, flash upon flash, boom after boom, told of the urgent danger which the mariners had perceived when it was too late. Each report was nearer and nearer, and the vessel must be driving fast towards the lee shore. I hurried to the house. Juba was asleep and snoring in a corner of the kitchen, and the negress was rocking herself before the fire, crooning out some plantation ditty. Evidently the blacks knew nothing of what had been done. I ran up to the glazed chamber, where the lamps stood. Hastily I relighted that which had been extinguished, and then approached the glass, and looked out. For a while, I saw nothing but the flashes of the minute guns, but presently a broad and lurid glare arose, and I could see by the light of an enormous fire of tar-barrels and wood, which had been hastily piled upon the beach, that the vessel had already grounded. She had struck, bows foremost, her upper spars and rigging had gone overboard, covering her deck with a



tangled mass of ruin, the waves breaking furiously over her. Hard-by, I could see a number of men, their swart figures clearly defined in the blood-red light, bustling up and down the sands. They had lighted the fire—the wreckers. Without pausing to consider the possible consequences to myself, I hurried down the ladder, calling on Juba to follow me; and, rushing towards the beach, hoped that I might be in time to reach a helping hand to some of the poor perishing creatures. When I drew near, I heard a great shout. The vessel had parted amidships. The whole sea, crimson with firelight, was covered all over with floating beams, bales, boxes, fraginents of wreck, and struggling human forms. The latter were but few, and their cries for help were disregarded by the greedy wretches on shore, who rushed, with loud shouts, waist-deep into the sea, to secure plunder. Chests, casks, and other prizes, were hurriedly grasped, and rolled or dragged above the reach of the waves, while the wreckers encouraged each other in their unhallowed task. It was a hideous scene, but I saw little of it, for my

eye suddenly lighted on something like a bundle of clothes, lashed to a bench of light cane-work, which was floating in an eddy hard-by. The white bundle stirred as it was swept past, and the long golden hair of a child, and the pale pretty face of a child, were clearly visible in the crimson-light. In an instant I was standing in the foaming water, which reached above my waist, and I had a firm grasp on the object that had attracted my notice. The undertow nearly bore me off my feet, and I staggered, but I held the child fast, cut the cord that fastened her to the bench, and bore her in my arms to the beach. A sweet face, innocent and beautiful, the face of a seraph! She was wet and cold, but fear had not benumbed her faculties, for she clung to my shoulder with one tiny hand, while with the other she pointed to the sea, and murmured in a weak voice, "Mamma! Please help! Oh pray, pray save mamma!"

Poor child! I looked on her with pity; no doubt was in my mind that her mother had perished in the disaster. The little girl—she could not have been above seven years old—

pointed eagerly to a mass of wreck that turned and twirled in the eddy as it drifted past, and begged and prayed me passionately "to help dear mamma."

The child was right: there *was* a human figure lashed to those spars, and the long brown hair and the streaming garments showed that the apparently lifeless form was a woman's. I laid the child lightly on the sandbank, telling her not to be afraid, and, throwing off my coat, plunged into the sea, and with great difficulty dragged the floating mass to shore. The little raft, hastily composed of a couple of studding-sail-booms and a hencoop, lashed together, had drifted far out before I reached it, and the strong current nearly sucked me out to sea as I swam back, panting and dripping wet; but I managed to drag the poor lady from the waves. She was quite insensible, her eyes were closed, and but for the very faintest action of the heart I should have thought life extinct. A pale delicately-moulded face, with some resemblance to that of the beautiful child, though the complexion and colour of the hair were very dissimilar.


The little girl put her arms round her mother's neck, and kissed her a hundred times.

I now began very seriously to consider how I should get the sufferer conveyed to safe shelter. To the wreckers I dared not appeal. Fortunately, they had been too busy to notice what was going on at a distance of fifty paces, and if they had seen me at all they probably took me for one of the gang. But I dared not call to them for help. They wanted no living witnesses of their misdeeds, no living claimants of the property which they were lawlessly appropriating.

As I swam back with my second prize, my face had been towards the wreck, and I had distinctly seen two human heads rise above the broken water, and two eager gasping human faces, and the outstretched hands of two half-drowned men. Both were bareheaded and drenched with salt water, but by the momentary glimpse I caught of them I should have said that the elder was a seaman, the other, who wore a dark moustache, a gentleman. They held out their hands, and cried for aid, but none came. Only a tall man,


whose face I did not see, but whose figure was like that of Japhet Brown, repulsed them with a boat-hook he carried, and pushed them back into the deep water, amid the jeers and yells of the wretches on shore. And so they sank, murdered for the sake of gain. I felt that my own life hung on a thread. If any wrecker espied me, the villains would not hesitate at another crime. But how could I go? I could carry the child with ease, but her poor mother!

Thank God! Juba in person! I had quite forgotten that I had ordered the young negro to follow me; I had far outstripped him, but I looked up and saw his black face. He was dreadfully alarmed at the fierce shouts and excited gestures of the wreckers, and was on the point of making off when I caught him by the collar. Between us, we contrived to carry the young woman over the dreary sandhills between us and the light-house, the child being sufficiently recovered to walk. We laid our patient on my bed, and when Aunt Polly had exhausted her first transports of astonishment, she proved an




excellent nurse. Thanks to the care and zeal of the kind negress, Mrs. Fairfax gradually revived. It was from her own lips that I learned her name and position in life. She was the young wife of a gentleman of good fortune in North Carolina, and nephew to the Governor of that State. But—poor thing!—I could not disguise from her that she was a widow, though I spared her the additional pang of knowing that her husband had been one of those who had been inhumanely thrust back into the sea to perish, although I had little doubt that one of the murdered men had been Captain Fairfax, whose description tallied with that of the poor victim I had beheld.

Leaving the widow weeping over her recent loss, while she clasped her rescued child as if she feared to lose her too, I went to make preparations for leaving the island. Most fortunately, I had employed my leisure in repairing the dismantled boat. The latter had no mast, but it was now watertight, and a pair of the old oars were fit for use. Before I slept, I brought the boat from the creek, and



moored it to the quay, ready for a start. My great fear was that, before we could escape, some of the wreckers might discover that I had been an eye-witness to their crimes, and had saved some of the passengers on board the foundered ship, which I now learned was the *Astarte*, of Boston. On this account, shortly after daybreak I caused mattresses and pillows to be placed in the boat; and Aunt Polly, Juba, and I, carried down Mrs. Fairfax, who was too much exhausted to walk. The child followed, and Aunt Polly arranged the blankets and cloaks around the invalid, while Juba was to take one oar, and I the other. The black lad was not wholly unused to a boat, having rowed on the river near Wilmington. In case of pursuit, which, however seemed improbable. I had placed the loaded gun in the boat, had hidden one of the cutlasses under my pea-coat, and concealed the other in the sand. We were just ready to push off, when I remembered that my sketches and drawings, which I was loth to leave, were still within the lighthouse. I ran back, put the portfolio under my arm, and was on the



threshold of my late dwelling, when the figure of a tall man appeared in the doorway—Japhet Brown!

His face was swollen and coarse with drink, and his fiery eyes drooped as they met mine.

“Whither away, chap? Yew seem in a plaguy hurry;” he growled, and extended his hand.

“I am going out. I have no time for conversation.”


The young villain burst out into oaths and curses.

“Conceited British hound, who be yew, to refuse to shake an honest man’s hand?”

“A murderer’s hand, you mean!” I cried, indignantly, though I repented the words before they were well out.

Japhet turned livid with passion. “Yòu know too much, my gentleman. I’ll stop your jaw pretty smart.”


So saying, he threw himself upon me, but I was luckily armed, and I drove him out of the lighthouse, pursuing him, cutlass in hand, for a short distance. Then I went back to the





boat. Juba and I were not first-rate rowers, the boat was heavy, and our progress was slow. Before we were half-way across the sound, I descried a swift whale-boat cleaving the waters, on our track. No doubt the wretch Japhet had given the alarm to his comrades, and had we been overtaken, the secret would have been preserved by the sacrifice of all our lives. But a sloop passing within hail picked us up, and carried us to the mainland. Before nightfall we were able to place Mrs. Fairfax and her little daughter under the safe care of her husband's relations.

I have little more to tell. The gratitude of the Fairfax family pressed upon me a large pecuniary reward. This I declined, but I gladly accepted patronage which enabled me to leave for Europe two years later, with—for an artist—a purse reasonably heavy. A States Marshal, backed by an armed force, was despatched to Cape Hatteras, with a warrant for the apprehension of the guilty. But some delay had occurred, and the Browns fled to Texas, in which remote region, years



afterwards, I read of the execution, by lynch law, of Japhet and his father, for robbery and murder.


## TAKEN IN TOW.

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“WILL you take the oath of allegiance, sirree? Answer me that Mister Britisher,” said the Federal commander, very harshly.

“I must decline doing anything of the sort,” was my answer. “I, as an Englisman, and a mere temporary sojourner in the States, have nothing whatever to do with this unhappy struggle, and——”

“And yet we found you doctorin’ them rebel scum, didn’t we?” roughly answered a stout man, who sat on the colonel’s left hand, who was, I believe, Deputy Provost Marshal of the force, which, under General Sturgis, was scourging the counties that lie between Grand Gulf and Bolivar, in the State of Mississippi. And the speaker emphasised his meaning by



pointing with a fat forefinger at several ghastly figures, some with bandaged limbs, others with pieces of bloodstained rag wrapped round their heads, who lay motionless on straw at the other end of the barn. These poor wretches, who might have been thought dead but for the low moan that from time to time was wrung by pain from one or the other of their dismal company, were my patients—Confederate guerillas. They were too severely wounded to share the flight of their comrades when the Northern troops arrived, and had been of necessity abandoned. As for myself, how I got into the scrape in which I found myself is soon told : I was merely one of the many young surgeons, who finding no sphere of action in the crowded old country, had made my way across the Atlantic without greatly bettering my prospects by doing so. I had just returned from Pike's Peak, whither I had been lured by flattering reports of the lucrative practice to be obtained there among the miners, and had found that all is not silver that glitters on the slopes of the Rocky Mountains. While still in that savage region, and uncertain as to my

future course, I had received a letter addressed to me at St. Louis by a friend in South America. This gentleman, an engineer, high in the employ of the Argentine Republic, had written to suggest that I should establish myself at a town some leagues beyond Buenos Ayres, a thriving place, where numerous European emigrants had established sheep-farms and factories, and where his influence would avail to procure me the post of chief surgeon to the government hospital. In my position, such an offer was not to be refused, and it was while making my way to New Orleans, with a view to embarking for Buenos Ayres, that I had fallen in with an armed band of Confederates, and had been in a manner impressed into rendering my professional services to their wounded.

All this I had related, frankly and freely, to the members of the Federal court-martial, producing at the same time my friend's letter, and other papers that corroborated my statement. However, those into whose hands I had fallen, persisted in regarding me as a prisoner of war, inasmuch as I had been found

in attendance on rebel patients, and my plea of neutrality was derided. It was decided that I should be sent to General Butler, then commanding the department, and that my future destiny should depend upon his good-will and pleasure.

“ You’ve escaped merely by the skin of your teeth, Britisher, I can tell you,” said an old captain of artillery, by far the most good natured of the party, when he came afterwards to the negro hut to which I had been removed, to communicate to me the sentence of the court-martial. “ Provost Noaks was for severity, and so was the colonel, but the major and I begged you off.”

“ Severity ?” asked I, in some perplexity. “ May I ask what the word implies in this case ?”

My informant directed a jet of tobacco-juice against the whitewashed wall, and watched the result with great apparent interest, before he replied with the most matter-of-course air possible : “ Just hanging Mister ! But you’ve got off cheap. You’re to go down river in one of the gunboats, the old Mohawk, most like,

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and I'll give a hint to Captain Hopkins to treat you well."

"But my patients? Poor fellows, they are not in a fit condition to be left," said I, lingering. However, the artillery officer curtly informed me that I should have quite enough to do in minding on which side my own slapjacks were buttered, that hempen cravats were easily come by, and that I had better be off before the colonel changed his mind once more, a thing likely enough to happen, since he was generally "ugly after liquoring:" an expression which I took to mean that the colonel was cross in his cups. And further debate was cut by the arrival of a file of soldiers with fixed bayonets, under whose care I was marched off, having only just time to snatch my valise and medicine chest, and to utter a word or two of thanks to my rugged preserver. The latter stood in the doorway of the hut, and shouted after me as I went:

"If it's the Mohawk, give Captain M'Causland's compliments, and say I'd be obliged to the skipper to give you a berth aft. Abe Hopkins knows me a few."

The Mohawk it was, and Captain Abimalech Hopkins received me with tolerable graciousness in consequence of my mention of his friend's name. He was a tall, raw-boned New Englander, one of those Cape Cod men, about whom there seems to be a sort of salt-water atmosphere, and indeed he was a thorough sailor. He was rough and shrewd, having been boatswain of a frigate in the United States Navy, and having received promotion to command a river-going gunboat when the demand for skilled officers began to exceed the supply. The Mohawk was a true war-vessel, however, armed with two very heavy pivot-guns, and protected as to her bows by some thin plates of iron. She had an armed crew, and a strong guard of marines, and was deep laden with powder, caps, clothing, and various stores, medical and military, which she had taken in at Columbus, and which were to be delivered at New Orleans. The voyage down stream was by no means secure, in spite of the exertions of the Federals to keep the navigation clear.

Independent of the fortified places in



Southern hands, the banks swarmed with guerillas, and vessels passing down were so continually fired at, that it was usual for whole flotillas of flat boats and lighters to remain in some safe spot, awaiting convoy. As it depended on the discretion of the commanders of the Federal gunboats to give or refuse the desired protection, and as valuable cargoes were constantly exposed to damage or detention for lack of escort, considerable bribes were often paid to the captains, under the various euphuisms of poundage, salvage, and premium. And the Mississippi station was reckoned, on that account, as only less profitable than the duty of blockading Charleston.

Captain Hopkins made no particular secret of his own transactions in that line, and he naïvely complained to me, as the steamer headed down the yellow river, of the ill fortune that had this time attended him. He had a few thousand dollars on freight, he said, but not a red cent's worth of dry goods or provisions for the New Orleans market, while, as for cotton, the most gainful article of com-

merce, he conceived that not a pound more could be brought in, all available stores having either been carried inland, or burned, to save it from capture by "them pesky guerillas," for whom the old seaman entertained a rooted abhorrence. As regarded myself, I had no cause to complain of my treatment, as a cabin passage was allotted me, and I was allowed the run of the boat on giving my parole not to attempt escape.

"Mind, Captain Hopkins," said I, half seriously, "I only promise not to run away at the stopping places down the river. I by no means mean to pledge myself to remain a prisoner, rescue or no rescue, so if the Confederates take the gunboat, I hold myself free to go where I please."

To which Captain Hopkins grimly rejoined, that if such a thing should occur, I was welcome to "make tracks," but that I need not build many hopes on so frail a foundation. The vessel, he added, would run past Vicksburg in the night, so as to prevent any chance of being sunk by the fire of the hostile batteries, and as for guerillas, he should like

to see them try to meddle with Uncle Sam's property under his charge. As he brought his broad hand down with a sounding slap upon the huge Parrott gun that was mounted amidships, and looked proudly at the trim neatness of the well-cared-for steamer, I could not but own that my chances of release in the manner hinted at were infinitesimally small.

As the captain had anticipated, we ran past Vicksburg under cloud of night, and thus escaped any unwelcome attentions from the Confederate batteries, and the greater part of our onward course lay through a district for the most part in Federal occupation. We saw, as we skirted the left bank of the river, the frequent flash of arms, and crowded together on the deck to watch the progress of the long straggling columns of blue-coated infantry, the clouds of dust raised by the passage of the cavalry and guns, and the innumerable array of white tilted waggons that crawled in the rear. At Natchez, where a strong garrison had been posted under shelter of some earthworks, just as we were


starting, after taking in fresh fuel, we were hailed from a canoe which a couple of negro boatmen paddled towards us, and a tall man, in a sort of nondescript uniform, with shoulder-straps and a narrow gold edging, came clambering up our side-ladder, and asked for the captain of the Mohawk. In spite of his semi-military garb, the new comer, who had a broad-brimmed hat, and a cigar between his lips, looked like anything but a soldier, and by the pen behind his ear I conjectured him to belong to one of the civil departments of the army.

A word or two from the stranger appeared to produce a talismanic effect upon our commander, and after a brief conference in the latter's cabin, the two worthies came on deck again, evidently on very good terms. The tall man was introduced to the lieutenants and midshipmen, and also to the marine officer and myself, as Dr. Amulius Cook, storekeeper in the United States army, and one who was to be our shipmate for the remainder of the voyage. And as the canoe slowly made its way back to shore, and the

Mohawk resumed her course down stream, Dr. Amulius, or, as he chose to abbreviate his name, Dr. 'Muly Cook, who was extremely frank and communicative, did me the favour to converse a good deal with myself.

"Your skipper's a rough specimen; wood with the bark on," said the doctor, with even more than the usual drawl and nasal twang that marks the genuine New Englander, "but he's clear grit, and real American. I say, weren't you surprised to see how 'nation polite he was to me, all in a moment?" he continued, as his little black eyes twinkled knowingly.

I smiled as I made answer that Captain Hopkins was probably conciliated by the sight of the Federal uniform. He certainly was not equally bland to all comers, for, at Natchez itself, he had somewhat roughly, on the plea of "public necessity," repulsed a merchant captain who came on board with a written requisition for convoy. When I related this to my new acquaintance, he laughed in a peculiar silent manner, but with obvious enjoyment, and told me how matters really stood.



He, Dr. Amulius Cook, was in charge of a string of four barges or flat boats, laden with cotton, which were lying at a place called Hautpré, five or six miles lower down than Natchez. This cotton had been part of the booty seized in a late raid of the Federal troops in the country traversed by the Big Black River, and to get it safely conveyed to New Orleans, where it would fetch an extremely high price, was the object of its custodian.

"You see, mister," said the doctor, as he slowly lighted his third cigar, "nothing riles them rebel hounds like taking off their cotton to market, and they burn every cent's worth as soon as they hear we're coming to fetch it, by reason of which prices rule awful high, and we shall realise a most cruel profit, or my name ain't 'Muly Cook when we sell it on the mart, in New Orleans city."


"We!" said I, somewhat bewildered. "I beg your pardon, but did you not say the cotton was government property?"

The storekeeper laughed again. "Britisher," said he, "you don't understand American ways, you don't. We go ahead, we do,

in Columbia happy land. Now, I'll make all clear as a glass of Taos whisky. See here; the cotton belongs to Uncle Sam, of course, but sold it must be. For that purpose, it is consigned to General Butler's brother, who does a smart trade now, on this cupful of yellow water we call the Mississippi, and the general gives a pass to permit its removal. Wall, sir, we've got to get the bales to New Orleans, and that's no joke, for there's more than one hornet's nest to pass, and we want convoy. We wait till we find a sensible skipper like Captain Hopkins, and we make it worth his while to take us in tow, right away down. Then the cotton's sold, and sold at a profit that whips creation, and commissary Butler, and storekeeper 'Muly Cook, and the skipper of the Mohawk, and Uncle Sam, are all the better for the dollars they share among 'em, don't you see? But here we are at Hautpré."

Sure enough, the Mohawk came to a dead stop in front of an insignificant little town, with its quaint wooden church, its score or two of small houses, bright with paint, or

gleaming white as lime could make them, the fac-simile of many of the overgrown Creole villages that stud the lower Mississippi. Beside the wharf of this place lay four large-sized flat boats, lashed together, and piled high with cotton bales in their coarse coverings of yellowish gunny cloth. These were apparently under the protection of a small guard of negro soldiers in the blue Federal uniform, who lolled about the untidy decks in every attitude indicative of careless repose, while a few boatmen, white and coloured, also lounged beside the cargo. These were the barges, with their precious freight, the value of which war and devastation had raised to so high a pitch, of which our new friend had spoken, and the broad hints he had given me as to the expected division of the profits of its sale, sufficed to explain the cheerful promptness with which the captain of the Mohawk consented to encumber himself with so unwieldy a charge. Tow-ropes were soon made fast to the steamer's stern and the broad prow of the leading flatboat, and the armed vessel, tugging the laden barges after her, snorted





and puffed her way sturdily but slowly down the river.

The rest of that morning's voyage was uneventful. Twice, indeed, we were fired on as we went past masked Confederate batteries among the tall reeds and cane-brake of the western shore, but the guns were mere six-pound field-pieces, and the aim bad and unsteady, and the Mohawk had merely to send a shower of grape-shot hissing and spattering among the green bushes of the bank, to drive away the invisible enemy. Whether the grape harmed the guerillas I cannot say, but the light round shot directed against the Mohawk passed across her bows without any effect, and in both cases we escaped without so much as one casualty. And of those dashing assaults which the Southerners sometimes attempt by the help of canoes and rafts, when opportunity serves, there was little risk in this case. Five-and-thirty marines, fifty sailors and officers, were on board the gunboat, besides the coloured troops, perhaps a dozen in number, who occupied the barges. And the great guns of the Mohawk gave her an incontestable superiority.

At Berryville, where we took in firewood in the course of the afternoon, another passenger came on board. This was a lady, splendidly dressed, and attended by a black female servant, who presented herself in virtue of a pass signed by General Sturgis, and in which document all naval and military functionaries were required to protect and assist the bearer, Mrs. Gregg, wife of Senator Gregg, then in Washington for the service of his country. Captain Hopkins growled a little at the first suggestion of a fresh accession to our party in the little cabin, but the order from General Sturgis was a formal one, and the sturdy ex-boatswain was not exempt from the almost superstitious reverence for travelling woman-kind which his countrymen entertain.

Mrs. Gregg, however, politically speaking, threatened to prove a firebrand in our hitherto tranquil society. She was fiercely loyal, and her ardour for the 'old flag' proved contagious, none of the other Americans liking to be outdone in verbal professions of attachment to the Union. I never shall forget what a flashing look of scorn she gave me when I

was introduced to her as an English surgeon who had been captured among rebels, and was now a paroled prisoner.

“Don’t excuse yourself, sir, nor wound the ears of a loyal lady with remarks on the duty of common humanity,” said Mrs. Gregg, eyeing me as if I had been a reptile. “I guess humanity to copperheads and rebel miscreants is often the worst cruelty to the noblest cause on earth, the cause of Freedom, sir, if you ever heard the word. I speak warmly, as the wife of a Union senator who has borne persecution and plunder for the sake of our glorious principles—Senator Titus Gregg, of Spanish Creek.”

Mrs. Gregg was a fine dark-eyed woman, of, perhaps, five-and-thirty, and her dress and manners were Parisian, but I very much regretted that she had come on board the boat at all, for she could speak but on one subject, or rather she contrived to make all topics bear upon the civil war, and her ardour seemed contagious. Before long, captain, lieutenants, and all, save myself, were launched into a tide of partisan discussion, and the bitterest

tongue of the party belonged to Dr. Cook, whose abhorrence of the rebels knew no bounds. But Mrs. Gregg did not limit her sympathy for the Federation to words alone. She had some cases of champagne with her luggage, and also some French brandy, which were being removed from the cellars of her country-house to her mansion in New Orleans, and a good many silver-necked flasks found their way by supper-time to the state-cabin, while Mrs. Gregg insisted on imparting a liberal share of the cognac to the crew and marines, "the gallant defenders of our holy Union." To this Captain Hopkins demurred. He had a very few good seamen, drafted from the regular navy, and whose superior efficiency and discipline served to leaven the rest, but the majority of his men were the sweepings of the New Orleans quays, mixed with lanky untutored lads from Missouri, who were more at home in driving a cart than in navigation. He was very strict with his motley ship's company, and his master-at-arms, a grim old whale-fisher, kept a vigilant watch lest spirits should be smuggled on board, as

it was evident that a free supply of whisky would destroy all subordination among the crew. However, Mrs. Gregg was bent upon hospitality towards the "brave fellows" forward, and the captain, probably computing that a dozen of Nantz would not produce a very serious effect when divided among eighty sailors and marines, grudgingly consented to permit that number of bottles to be distributed to the Mohawk's men.


How well I remember that supper in the gunboat's cabin, the popping of corks, the rattle of knives and forks, and the flow of champagne and noisy conversation, which all tended to one subject, war! Such bragging and boasting, such outspoken enthusiasm for the Union, and such vituperation of the rebels, it had not yet been my lot to hearken to. Mrs. Gregg had struck the key-note, and the whole of the party took up the same strain, in no measured terms. To hear them, it would have appeared that the solid earth might be expected to sink beneath the sea, and the order of nature to be suspended, should the Secessionists triumph. But of that there was

little prospect. Indeed, so loudly were the rebels described as starving, cowardly, dejected, and conquered, that there really seemed to be little credit in crushing down such hordes of hungry wretches. The noisy talk, and the clatter of glasses and plates, made my head ache: so, glad of an excuse to leave a scene that had no interest for me, I slipped away, and went on deck.

The skylight of the cabin had been raised to admit air, and through the filmy mosquito-nets I could see the group around the table. It struck me, by the flushed faces and vacant stare of the majority, the young lieutenants', and the marine officer, that Senator Gregg's wine must be very strong indeed. The captain preferred ration rum, as he said, to all the grape juice of France, and he, with his tumbler of cold grog before him, and the butt-end of a revolver, from which he never parted, sticking out of the breast of his navy blue coat, was sober enough. Dr. Cook, though very talkative, and in high spirits, seemed more addicted to waving his glass of creaming amber, and occasionally proposing toasts to

the health of "Honest Old Abe," "Fighting Joe Hooker," and so forth, than to any deep potations. Mrs. Gregg, though she smiled, and prattled incessantly, scarcely so much as put the tall glass to her lips. The subalterns, however, were less abstemious, and the negro steward and his boy went busily to and fro, uncorking fresh bottles.

I went aft, and stood beside the taffrail, under shadow of the wheel-house, where the careful helmsman was guiding the steamer down stream. Three or four men, the watch, I suppose, were on deck, lying down among the spare sails and cordage, and apparently asleep, but I saw no officer. Indeed, I fancy that discipline had been somewhat relaxed for a time, in consequence of the symposium in the cabin, and of Captain Hopkins's unusual good humour, due to his anticipated profits on the cotton. I could hear the crew, noisy and merry, in the fore-castle, and I easily guessed that Mrs. Gregg's present of brandy was under discussion. The twanging of the fiddle and the sound of a negro song came at intervals from below, accompanied by



clapping of hands and stamping of feet. Crouched under the bulwarks was a dark form, that of a woman with a gay Madras handkerchief tied round her head—Judy, Mrs. Gregg's negress, who had probably returned from carrying the brandy to the Mohawk's men by her mistress's orders. A ray of moonlight fell on her face, and I noticed that her white teeth were glistening forth in a smile, perhaps of sympathy with the mirth indicated by the sounds that reached her.

I had drunk but two glasses of the wine that frothed so freely below, but my temples throbbed violently, and the blood that coursed through my veins was hot and fevered. I was glad, therefore, to feel the cooler air that swept along the river, above whose brown waters a thin transparent mist, like a veil of bluish gauze, rose in irregular folds. The tall monotonous levée, built to keep out the stream from the rich plantations, could alone be seen to the eastward, but the western bank was fringed by the dark trees of the solemn forest, whence came at intervals the cry of night-birds, and the low whine of a wolf



prowling for prey. The whooping of the great goat-sucker, with its strange note that fancy has rendered into the words "Willy—come—go," was answered by a hoarse whistling cry from the cayman among the reeds. As we floated on, I could see in the bright moonlight the hideous form of more than one alligator lying log-like on the surface. In the deep thickets the fire-flies and fire-beetles shone like a million tiny lamps. What was that? The howling of an owl, twice repeated, and so near that I looked round, startled, but no bird was visible. However, a human form emerged from the shadow of the bulwarks, and the voice of Dr. 'Muly Cook said at my elbow,

"Pleasanter here, Mr. Harding, than down in that hot cabin." And he, too, looked out, as if musing on the tranquil beauty of the prospect. Gradually we got into conversation on indifferent topics, and I discovered that the storekeeper, of whose character I had formed no very exalted estimate, was both a better bred and a more thoughtful man than I had taken him to be. It was notable, too,

that his nasal accent was no longer prominent, and in the gentle quiet personage who spoke with so much artistic perception of the effects of light and shade on the water's edge, and on the leafy grandeur of the southern forest, I hardly recognised the unscrupulous partisan of union at any price.

Dr. Cook was making some remarks on the wealth of parasitic vegetation, the bush vine, the Spanish moss, and the other creepers that hung in endless profusion from the giant trees on our right, when the low cry of the goat-sucker, coming to all appearance from the boat astern, made him start and break off in the midst of a sentence. Then, with a muttered apology, he left me and returned to the cabin.

I remained alone. The mists were beginning to rise more thickly from the broad seething river, and the bright moonlight could scarcely pierce the rolling wreaths of fog. On board, I heard nothing but the sound of the steamer's bell, as the sentry struck it to mark the prescribed interval, but the fiddle was hushed, and no more din of joyous voices

came from the forecastle. The party in the cabin, too, had become silent, and I only heard the panting of the engine as the gun-boat made her way along the bends of the endless river. We were now in a very lonely part of our course. Short of Baton Rouge and Port Hudson there were no places of note, and the levées lay stretching drearily for leagues and leagues without a sign of life being visible.

Suddenly I became aware of a low murmuring sound, like the hum of bees stirring in their hive, and which seemed to come from the laden flat boats astern. The sound swelled and deepened, and seemed to approach, and I could distinguish the buzz of many voices speaking together in an under tone, and with this was mingled a faint splashing of water. The tow-rope beside me grated on the planking of the deck, as it was violently jerked, and it was evident that something unusual was taking place. My first idea was that the barges had been suddenly dashed against snags or floating timber, or had sprung a leak, and I was in the act of

stepping forward to give an alarm to the sailors of the watch, when a dark form seemed to rise, as it were, out of the mists of the river, and a man came scrambling with cat-like activity over the poop bulwarks beside me, and in a moment more I felt a bony hand clutch me by the throat, while a drawn bayonet was levelled at my breast. By the moonlight I could see, to my amazement, that this unexpected assailant was one of the coloured soldiers on duty in the cotton boats.


“Ef you stir an eyelash, ef you speak above your breath, I’ll drive the cold iron through your hump ribs, jest as I would through a calf buffler on the pararas,” said a man, in a fierce whisper, but in a voice that I knew could belong to no negro. I stood still and mute, of course, while a number of other figures came pouring over the taffrail, dropping from the rigging, and clambering over the sides of the vessel, but all this was so quickly and noiselessly done, that the portion of the Mohawk’s crew on deck remained unconscious of what was going on.

"Who are you? Speak you Yankee rascal!" hissed my captor, relaxing his grasp a little. Half choked and startled as I was, I still made shift to give a tolerable lucid account of my own identity, but before I had said a dozen words, a gaunt fellow in a red shirt and cavalry overalls came shouldering through the group, and put his bearded face close to mine.

"Whoop! boys, all he says is true enough. He's the British doctor we pressed into the service up on the Yazoo, and the Yankees tuk him. Loose him, Jem!"

The speaker's wish was complied with, but he had raised his voice incautiously, and the helmsman started and looked down from his perch in the wheel-house, shouting out, "Hilloa, there, what's afoot now? Watch ahoy! Treachery!"

Bang went a pistol by way of answer, and the steersman fell groaning, while a clamour of voices succeeded. The sentry started forward and levelled his musket at the intruders, but the piece missed fire, and the watch were in a moment overpowered, beaten to the deck,



and bound hand and foot by the enemy, who far out-numbered them, since fresh assailants scrambled up at every moment from the cotton-boats to join in the fray. I was carried off my feet by the rush that ensued, and soon found myself in the cabin, spectator of a scene which, in my bewilderment, I could only partially comprehend.

Captain Hopkins, foaming with rage, was a prisoner in the grasp of two men, one of whom wore the "butternut" uniform of the South-Western army of the Confederates, while the other was in the light blue garb of the coloured troops in Federal pay, though his woolly wig was awry, and the black stain had been partially rubbed from his white face in the scuffle that had ensued. The old seaman had fought hard ; his clothes were torn, and he seemed unsubdued in soul, as he stood gasping for breath and glaring savagely at Dr. 'Muly Cook, who stood on the other side of the table, with a revolver in his hand that looked very like that which I had seen protruding from the captain's pocket. The marine officer, whose sword lay broken at his

feet, was powerless in the clutch of two or three rough guerilla-looking figures, who were binding his hands with his own belt. The other officers were either sleeping with their heads upon the table, or stupidly surveying the scene with the vacant stare of hopeless intoxication. Mrs. Gregg, serene amid the confusion, wore a triumphant smile.

"You all-fired, double-dyed traitor! You are at the bottom of this! You snatched the pistol from me, when in a second more I'd have——Help, help! to arms, on deck there!" roared Captain Hopkins, as the trampling of feet and clash of steel overhead suggested to him the idea that the Mohawk's crew were rallying to his rescue. But he was disappointed, for the faces that looked down the cabin skylight, like those of the group crowding into the saloon below, were those of armed men wearing the hated uniform of the South. As for the storekeeper, he answered the captain's speech with great coolness.

"Spare your breath, sir," said he, with contemptuous politeness; "your sailors and

marines will hardly answer to your call. Look at your officers. They have done justice, it would seem, to Mrs. Gregg's champagne, and the brandy that——"

"The liquor was drugged, as I'm a sinner, wine and brandy too!" exclaimed Hopkins, as the conviction flashed upon him; "but who are you, and the cotton, too, what on airth——"

"You'll never sell that cotton at fifty cents a pound in greenbacks, you won't," said a voice down the skylight. "Wagh! but I'm most stifled, lying there under the cover, like a turkey in a coop. 'Twarn't a good time we had of it, major, I can tell you, pricking holes with our bowie-knives to get a breath of air. I've most forgot how to stir my arms, I have, but the spec warn't bad, after all."

The stratagem was now revealed. Dr. Cook, the convenient Federal storekeeper, who had appealed so successfully to the captain's love of dollars, was no other than Major Norris, C. S., one of the most adroit and daring cavalry officers of General Kirby



Smith's army, and Mrs. Gregg was his wife. The whole scheme had been contrived for the purpose of capturing the Mohawk, which was well known to the numerous and zealous agents of the South as being on her way to New Orleans, laden with valuable war material. The sham cotton bales were really nothing but enormous wicker work cages covered with packing cloth, and in which apertures had been made to admit air to the Confederate soldiers concealed within. A few of the adventurers had been disguised, some as boatmen, others as negro troops in Federal pay, the better to mislead suspicion, while Major Norris, at no slight risk of detection, which in this case would have involved a penalty of death, had undertaken to personate the part of an unscrupulous civilian in government employ, and had acted the character so well as to avert suspicion until the very moment when he had wrested the revolver from the astonished commander of the Mohawk. The papers exhibited, I need hardly say, were forgeries, while the greater part of the sailors and marines were

found stupified by the effects of the narcotic with which the wine and brandy had been drugged, and which Mrs. Norris, alias Gregg, had conveyed to the crew by the hands of her faithful coloured maid, Judy, who, as she boasted, hated the "bobolitionists" as much as her mistress did. And Judy had rendered another service, having slyly seized an opportunity of withdrawing the copper cap from the sentry's musket, which certainly prevented bloodshed.

The affair was not a very tragic one, for the conquerors made a merciful use of their victory, and the steersman's wound, which was not mortal, was the only one inflicted in the hurry of the capture. The Mohawk, however, was pillaged and set on fire, after having been stripped of every scrap of iron or copper, down to her ring-bolts and rivets, and I believe the stores she contained were of great use to the Confederate army in the wild region west of the Mississippi. As for my own share in the transaction, the steamer's change of owners proved fortunate to me, since through the kind offices of Major Norris

I was permitted to pursue my way, unmolested, through Western Louisiana and Texas, and, finally embarking at Matamoras, reached my destination in safety. Captain Hopkins and the rest were of course made prisoners of war, but I have no doubt have long since been exchanged. Of the further fortunes of the actors in this little drama I know nothing.

THE END.

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